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## **FORT SNELLING'S BUILDINGS 17, 18, 22, AND 30: THEIR EVOLUTION AND CONTEXT**

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## INTRODUCTION

The following report is an expansion of a section entitled “History of Adjacent Buildings” that was included in “New Fort Snelling Visitor Center: Response to Questions Raised during the Section 106 Consultation Process,” dated November 9, 2007. The report draws on several studies of the fort’s history that have been written in recent years including “All That Remains: A Study of Historic Structures at Fort Snelling, Minnesota” and “From Frontier to Country Club: A Historical Study of the ‘New’ Fort Snelling.” These studies were written for specific purposes and each has added valuable perspectives to the understanding of the fort’s history.<sup>1</sup>

The present study was likewise conceived with a mission: to analyze the evolution of Buildings 17, 18, 22, and 30 and their environs, particularly in the twentieth century, since three of the four buildings were products of that century. At the direction of John Anfinson of the National Park Service and Dennis Gimmestad of the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, the following study examines not only the physical and functional changes of these buildings but their relationship to the history of Fort Snelling and the United States Army. This broader context will provide perspective for evaluating the impact of proposed changes in the vicinity. The report was written by historian Charlene Roise, a principal of Hess, Roise and Company, with assistance from staff researcher Penny Petersen.

There is a surfeit of information on the history of the United States Army. While a number of sources were examined, the two-volume *American Military History* published by the army’s Center of Military History was most often relied on as a source for general information.<sup>2</sup> The history of Fort Snelling is less evenly documented. Most attention has focused on the nineteenth-century fort, although many gaps remain. Information on the fort in the twentieth century is even spottier, especially when it comes to details about individual structures.

Some things can be asserted with a good degree of certainty. When artillery troops were stationed at the fort, for example, they appear to have stayed in the barracks originally built for the artillery and used the associated stables and other buildings. The frequent movement of units and changes in designations, however, make it difficult to track who was where and when they were there. This is even more the case at the company level. In 1929, for example, the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* reported that a new floor had been installed in the Company D stables using wood paver blocks salvaged from Cedar Avenue, which the City of Minneapolis was resurfacing. Men from the company installed the pavers in “the stalls for our elite mules, so that they will be immune to bad colds and cold feet this winter.” In this case, it seems likely that the subject was the artillery stables. When the bulletin mentioned that the first and second floors of Company D’s barracks were replaced in January 1931, it

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Clouse and Elizabeth Knudson Steiner, “All That Remains: A Study of Historic Structures at Fort Snelling, Minnesota,” draft, 1998, prepared for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and Abigail Christman and Charlene Roise, “From Frontier to Country Club: A Historical Study of the ‘New’ Fort Snelling,” May 2002, prepared by Hess, Roise and Company for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Steward, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775-1917*, and vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2005).



## THE BUREAUCRATIC LEGACY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Since the time of the country's founding, the military in the United States has been buffeted by contrary demands from American citizens. Protecting the nation's boundaries and interests is a constant concern—although the definition of “interests” has varied greatly over time. At the same time, Americans have little enthusiasm for a large, permanent military force in times of peace. Decisions made by politicians regarding military actions and budgets are driven sometimes by national consensus, sometimes by a balanced evaluation of the international situation, and sometimes by the desire for the pork-barrel benefits that will accrue to a home district. Political meddling has added tension within the services, where civilian and military leadership might champion different courses of action. In the end, both are sometimes confounded by bureaucratic inertia.

The evolution of the U.S. Army reflects these conflicting tendencies. The first substantial effort to shape the army into a rational organization was initiated by Secretary of War John Calhoun after the War of 1812. Responsibilities were split between the War Department general staff in Washington and field forces, administered by military professionals. The general staff, historian James Hewes explains, “was not a general staff in the modern sense of an over-all planning and coordinating agency. It consisted instead of a group of autonomous bureau chiefs, each responsible under the Secretary for the management of a specialized function or service. By the 1890s the principal bureaus were the Judge Advocate General's Department, the Inspector General's Department, the Adjutant General's Department, the Quartermaster's Department, the Subsistence Department, the Pay Department, the Medical Department, the Corps of Engineers, the Ordnance Department, and the Signal Corps.” Rather than work towards the same end, the departments vigorously defended their autonomy and defied efforts at reform. Bureau chiefs witnessed the arrival and departure of numerous secretaries of war during their long tenures, well aware that any changes a secretary demanded could be reversed as soon as that secretary left the position. Congress directly approved and monitored the budget for each department, reinforcing their independence.<sup>5</sup>

The general staff was often at odds with the line command in the field, which “was organized in tactical units and stationed at posts throughout the country. The regiment was normally the largest unit and was often scattered over a large area. The posts were grouped geographically into ‘departments’ commended by officers in the rank of colonel or higher.” A “commanding general” in Washington was technically in charge of the field forces, but the role was poorly defined, unevenly supported by the president and secretary of war, and undercut by direct interaction between field staff and Washington bureaus. With the secretary of war and the bureau chiefs in control of finances, the commanding general was, effectively, powerless. With this less than optimal structure, the army oversaw the great expansion of the United States to the west—and the establishment of Fort Snelling.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> James E. Hewes Jr., *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1975), 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

## LOST FRONTIER: FORT SNELLING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

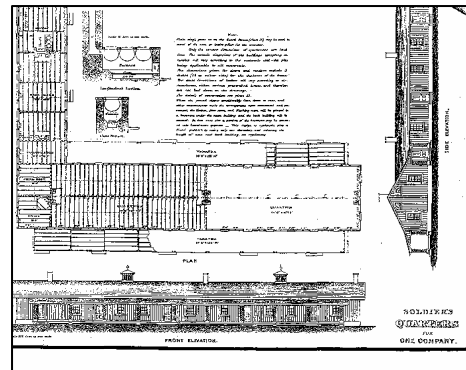
Fort Snelling was built in the aftermath of the War of 1812 as the U.S. military expanded to protect the country's new territory. Within a few decades, though, the frontier had moved well beyond these forts. Obsolete for defense, the forts became garrisons for amassing troops to send to other locations.

Fort Snelling settled comfortably into this role. Indeed, many had questioned from the outset whether its walls could withstand a determined attack. The troops that had established Fort Snelling were from the Fifth Infantry. In 1828, they were replaced by members of the First Infantry. The Fifth returned in 1837.<sup>7</sup>

As the population of Saint Paul and Minneapolis grew and settlers flocked to the western prairies, the fort's role continued to diminish. In 1856, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis withdrew the garrison. The next year, the federal government sold the Fort Snelling military reservation to Franklin Steele, a land speculator who had served as a sutler at the fort.<sup>8</sup>

The Civil War, conflicts with Native Americans, and Steele's failure to make scheduled payments for the property caused the federal government to reconsider the sale. The army reoccupied the fort in 1861. At this point, nearly all of the fort's facilities were within the 1820s walls. One exception was a cemetery that had been established along the Mississippi River bluff a distance west of the fort in the mid-1820s. The burial ground comprised "73 square rods of land" with "a good substantial wooden picket enclosure," according to an 1866 report. It was situated "1/8 mile east of a permanently located road, called the Hennepin and Fort Snelling road."<sup>9</sup>

More development moved beyond the confines of the original fort in the 1860s. New quarters, mess halls, stables, and other buildings extended west along the Mississippi River bluff line. These apparently following the pattern of frontier forts where "temporary barracks [were] constructed by troop labor from materials at hand," according to the army's "National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations, 1790-1940." "The typical barracks housed one company of men and contained sleeping quarters, a kitchen, and a mess room; it usually was a one-story, narrow, rectangular building with a porch. A barracks design of this type appeared in the unofficial 1860



*One-story Barracks, from 1860 Army Regulations. (Reprinted in R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, "National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations, 1790-1940," 321)*

<sup>7</sup> Evan Jones, *Citadel in the Wilderness: The Story of Fort Snelling and the Northwest Frontier* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1966), 40, 120-121, 189.

<sup>8</sup> "Fort Snelling, Minn.," 3, [May 11, 1885], in U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, Consolidated correspondence file relating to Fort Snelling, Box 1, File 5, copies of materials from National Archives, available at Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter cited as Consolidated correspondence, NA-MHS).

<sup>9</sup> C. W. Nash to General M. Meigs, April 12, 1866, in Box 2, File 15, Consolidated correspondence, NA-MHS.

Army regulations and is exemplified by examples of barracks identified at early frontier posts constructed before and after the Civil War.” An illustration for “Soldier’s Quarters for One Company” from the 1860 regulations also shows an L-shaped configuration. The front section, which held quarters, is rectangular and flanked by porches on its long axis. Projecting behind is a narrower structure with a washing room, mess room, and kitchen, the latter with a substantial hearth and cooking range. Fort Snelling’s 1860s barracks along the Mississippi bluff appear to be multiples of this design, with the quarters sections connected end to end.<sup>10</sup>

The plan was part of the initial effort by the army to adopt standard plans and specifications. The first rudimentary set from 1860 addressed a variety of building types including barracks and stables. In response to the wide range of conditions encountered across the country, the buildings could be erected from whatever material was readily available—be it stone, wood, logs, or adobe. The quartermaster also provided basic guidelines for the overall layout of a garrison.<sup>11</sup>

Another set of plans appeared in 1872 in response to criticism of unhealthy and unsafe conditions on many posts by the surgeon general and others. Using plans developed and approved in a central office ensured that the army’s buildings met at least minimal standards and kept costs under control. Still, standardization was not completely embraced by the army until the 1890s.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Goodwin, R. Christopher. “National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations,” 1:120 and 2:321. The plan notes that “when the ground slopes considerably from front to rear, and other circumstances make the arrangement more economical and convenient, the Kitchen, Mess room, and Washing room will be placed in a basement under the main building and the back building will be omitted.” A recent photograph of an 1870 barracks of this design, built of stone and somewhat modified, appears in the second volume of the context study on page 33.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1:120.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## THE UPPER POST TAKES CENTER STAGE

The debt that the country incurred during the Civil War resulted in conservative spending for years thereafter. Army leaders began planning a reorganization to consolidate an inefficient collection of forts, cobbled together over time, into rational system of high-quality garrisons. Conflicts between settlers and Native Americans delayed action on this initiative during the 1870s, but conditions changed as the tribes were forced into reservations, settlement mushroomed in the West, and the country's railroad network expanded, improving transportation for both pioneers and troops.<sup>13</sup>

Plans for a major overhaul of the army were presented to Congress in 1882 by William T. Sherman, commanding general of the army. He proposed upgrading some forts with brick and stone buildings for long-term service, improving others with frame buildings for temporary use, and jettisoning some posts immediately. While the concept was endorsed, its implementation was slowed by a scarcity of funds and an abundance of political interference.<sup>14</sup>

It was during this transitional period that the "Upper Post" was constructed for the Department of Dakota on Fort Snelling's Minnesota River bluff. The original fort and adjacent area on the Mississippi River bluff became know as the "Lower Post." (Regrading projects and expansion of the road between the Lower and Upper Posts has obscured the change in elevation between them that inspired the designations.) Congress approved the first appropriation for the new facilities in 1879. This covered construction of the headquarters' offices, a residence for the commanding officer, and twelve buildings to house his staff. The second appropriation in the following year included "buildings (probably fifteen) for quarters, mess-halls, kitchens &c., for general service clerks, enlisted men, and civilian employees employed at department headquarters," "stables for public and private animals, forage-house, wagon and harness rooms," and post infrastructure such as sidewalks, water supply, and heating. Both appropriations were for \$100,000. This was "a large sum," General Sherman acknowledged, but "I regard it as a strategic point which should always be held by the United States, and am therefore disposed to recommend almost any outlay which will make it valuable as a permanent military site." His recommendation might have been influenced by his boss, Secretary of War Alexander Ramsey, who had served as territorial governor, governor, and U.S. Senator for Minnesota, and also as mayor of Saint Paul.<sup>15</sup>

The appropriations do not mention a structure for ordnance, but it appears that Building 22 dates from this period. Quartermaster records give its construction date as 1878. Assuming this is so, it is the only extant feature at the Lower Post representing this era. A contextual study on "Army Ammunition and Explosives Storage in the United States: 1775-1945," which the army issued in 2000, notes that "usually a fort only required one structure for ordnance storage, but multiple structures were constructed at larger installations. If possible,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1:43, 1:46.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1:46.

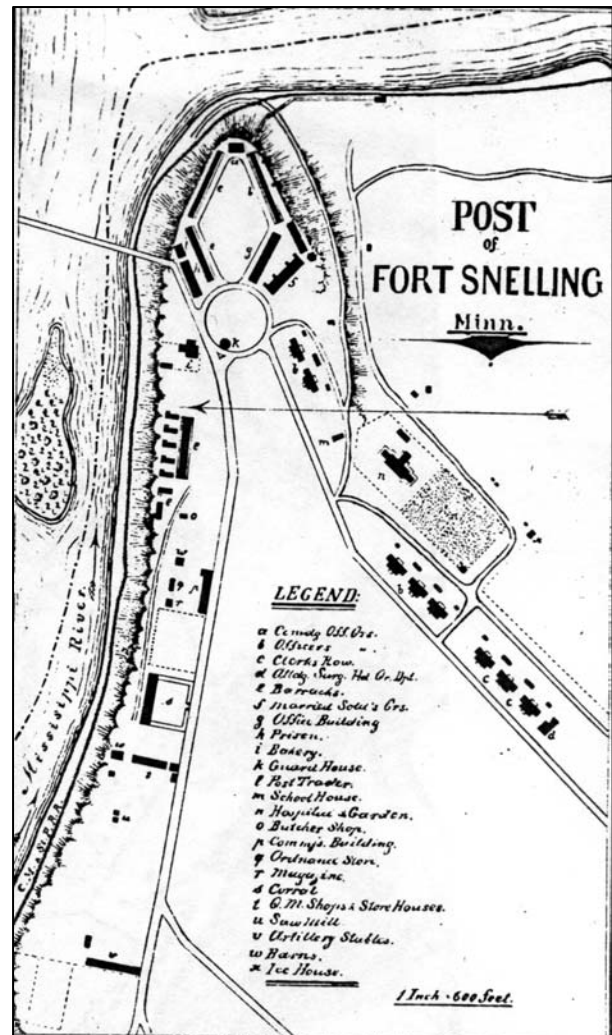
<sup>15</sup> "Letter from the Secretary of War Transmitting Report of Lieut. Col. T. H. Tompkins, Recommending Appropriation of \$100,000 for Construction Buildings on the Fort Snelling Military Reservation," Senate Ex. Doc. No. 54, 46<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2d sess.



the magazine was constructed of brick or stone.” The army did not issue standard plans for these utilitarian structures in the nineteenth century, so their function largely dictated their form. Air pockets in the walls, independent drainage systems, and avoidance of iron in the structure were some of the unique design features employed to keep stores dry and inert—or, in the event of fire or explosion, to minimize damage to anyone or anything in the vicinity. Magazines were sometimes located near officers’ quarters to keep the building under surveillance and its contents close at hand. At Fort Snelling, though, Building 22 and a couple of other stone magazines were in the vicinity of the 1820s post cemetery, well away from the officers’ quarters.<sup>16</sup>

It appears likely that the walls of the old fort were mined for the construction of this building and the foundations for Upper Post buildings. By 1885, the walls were completely gone, according to a contemporary report: “Of the old defenses, only two towers remain; the other towers, walls, &c., having been demolished.” All in all, the Lower Post had become a backwater. The army considered it a separate administrative unit—and of a distinctly lower rank than the Department of Dakota. When John Biddle, the chief engineer officer of the Department of Dakota, prepared descriptions of the military reservation in 1885, he did one for the Department of Dakota and one for the “post,” which he described as “what remains of the old fort with additions made since 1865.”<sup>17</sup>

An accompanying map, somewhat off scale, shows an array of buildings at the Lower Post on the river side of Tower Avenue (which is not identified) between the old fort and the intersection of Bloomington Road. Immediately adjacent to the where the fort wall had once stood was the “prison for military convicts: one story stone, 129-3/4 x 33 feet” (h), with the bakery, 38 feet by 28 feet (i), aligned at its northeast end. Almost directly north



“Post at Fort Snelling, Minn.,” 1885, prepared by office of John Biddle, Engineer Corps, Chief Engineer Officer of the Department of Dakota.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Murphey, Dwight Packer, Cynthia Savage, Duane E. Peter, and Marsha Prior, “Final Draft: Army Ammunition and Explosives Storage in the United States, 1775-1945,” prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, July 2000, 10-12.

<sup>17</sup> “Fort Snelling, Minn.,” 2.

of the Round Tower was the post trader, who apparently had a fenced yard surrounding a house of irregular plan and, at the back corner of the parcel, a stable or storehouse.

Further west along the bluff was a barracks (e), the only one of the post's three barracks that was outside of the original fort and was not of stone. The report described the barracks "a two story frame building, 228-1/2 x 30-1/3 feet, with six detached Ls 56-1/4 x 18-1/4 feet, each containing kitchen and dining room, used by two companies of Infantry, one mounted battery and by recruit detachment." Directly to the west along the bluff were two buildings that appear to be associated with the barracks. Perhaps these represent the "six washhouses" erected in 1884 for the troops occupying the barracks. At about the same time, the building's porches were repaired.<sup>18</sup>

Slightly inland was the butcher's shop (o). Building 22 (p) served as the "commissary and quartermaster store house: a one story stone building, 155-3/4 x 26 feet, with L 18 x 12 feet, also a small cellar." Clustered nearby were a barn (w), ordnance storehouse (q), and magazine (r).<sup>19</sup>

On the other side of the cemetery, which is identified only by dotted lines apparently indicating a fence, was a slightly smaller rectangular corral (s), which measured 179-1/2 by 157 feet. The north end of the corral was apparently formed by a "stone stable, 179-1/2 x 33 feet, with stalls for eighty-four animals, wagon sheds around inside of wall." Still further to the west was a row of buildings on a north-south axis that included a barn (w), quartermaster's shops and storehouses (t), and several small, unidentified structures. The quartermaster's shops were 120 by 21 feet. The small structures might have been a granary (30-1/4 by 20-1/4 feet), coal house (26 by 16 feet), and ice house (50-1/4 by 20-1/4 feet) mentioned by the report, or perhaps the "small frame stables for commanding officer and post surgeon."<sup>20</sup>

Two small structures to the west are a sawmill (u) "for cutting firewood, 24 x 18 feet." Frame artillery stables (v), 192 feet by 31 feet, capable of sheltering fifty-seven animals, were beyond the junction of Bloomington Road. Perhaps the smaller building nearby was the "forage room and blacksmith shop in frame building, 50 x 16 feet."<sup>21</sup>

The exact construction dates for most of these buildings are difficult to determine. The barracks (e) are apparently Civil War vintage, although evidence is somewhat conflicting. While historic photographs appear to show the draft rendezvous area in the early 1860s, the quartermaster general wrote to the secretary of war after touring Fort Snelling in 1866: "In addition to the Post buildings a draft Rendezvous has been built since the war," adding: "They are the best buildings of the kind I have ever seen." The war he referred to is presumably the Civil War, suggesting that the buildings date from 1865-1866. According to a "descriptive commentary" from a few years later, though, the construction occurred during

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; C. K. Hodges [?], assistant quartermaster, to Quartermaster General, March 31, 1884, Box 2, File 16, Consolidated correspondence, NA-MHS.

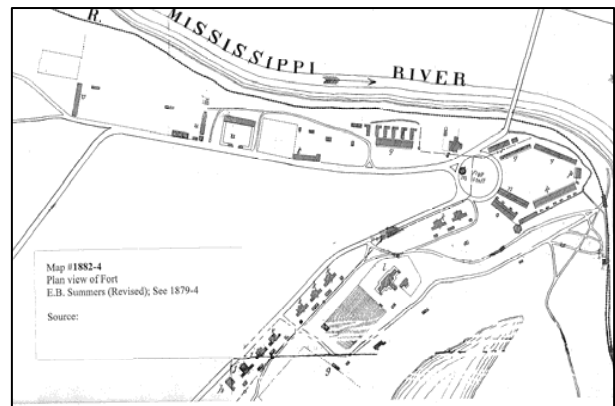
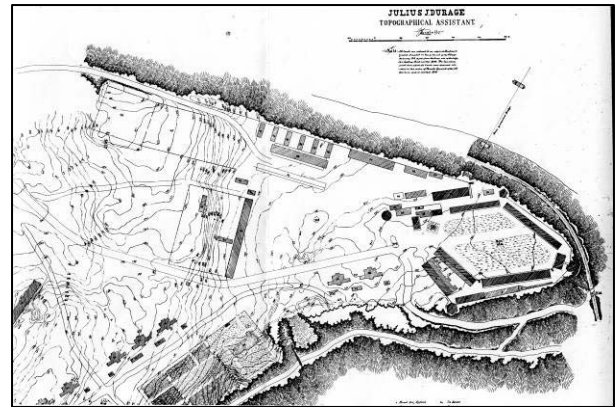
<sup>19</sup> "Fort Snelling, Minn.," 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

the war: “The stables, workshops and ice house and other necessary buildings are outside the wall. During the Rebellion a number of wooden barracks were built a short distance above the Fort which still remain.”<sup>22</sup>

Many of the other structures appear relatively new, given information on maps dating from 1878 and 1882. A group of buildings in the vicinity of the prison, which was constructed in 1864-1865, appear to have been demolished between the times these maps were drawn. This was presumably due to the erection of the bridge across the Mississippi in 1880 because the buildings stood in the way of the south abutment and access road. This project—concurrent with the arrival of the Department of Dakota—might have presented an opportunity for consolidating some facilities and an impetus for moving west of the cemetery, an area that does not appear to have been occupied previously. The 1878 map shows the quartermaster in a small office between the Round Tower and prison, with stables and shops left over from the Civil War era. In the 1882 map, these buildings are gone and the quartermaster’s complex (u) has appeared west of the cemetery. The artillery stables (v) might have substituted for the stables that were just east of the barracks in 1878, which no longer exist on the 1882 map. The trader’s house (s) also seems to be new in 1882, although it might have been assembled from other buildings in the vicinity, including a previous trader’s building that was near the prison on the 1878 map but not there in 1882.<sup>23</sup>



*Above: 1878 survey of Fort Snelling, drawn by Julius J. Durage, topographical assistant, Department of Dakota.*

*Below: ca. 1883 plan by E. B. Summers, topographical assistant, Department of Dakota.*

At some point—perhaps when headquarters of the Department of Dakota moved back to downtown Saint Paul in 1886—the facilities duplicated at both posts were apparently consolidated at the Upper Post. The newer, improved quartermaster’s compound on Bloomington Road at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue, for example, seems to have

<sup>22</sup> Quartermaster General to Secretary of War, June 16, 1866, available in Box 2, File 15, Consolidated correspondence, NA-MHS; U.S. Army, Descriptive commentaries from the medical histories of posts, [178-]-1920 [microform], copies of materials from National Archives, available at Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup> “Map of Fort Snelling, Hennepin County, Minn., Showing the Latest Improvements to Date,” drawn by “L.T.M.,” December 27, 1878; E. B. Summers, “Map of Fort Snelling Reservation,” 1882; both maps available at the Fort Snelling Visitor Center.

absorbed the Lower Post facilities, which disappear from maps in the late nineteenth century. Even the Lower Post cemetery was abandoned in the 1880s, at least for new burials. In the summer of 1887 the army authorized the construction of a vault and an iron fence for a new cemetery, no larger than two acres in size, south of the Upper Post. The adjutant general's office in Washington emphasized that "the moving of the bodies from the old to the new site is not authorized."<sup>24</sup>

At about the same time, the fort's only field artillery unit, Battery F, was reassigned. Artillery were absent from the fort for the next fourteen years. While this was a blow, new life was breathed into the fort with the arrival of the Third Regiment of Infantry in 1888. Known as the "Old Guard," the Third had an illustrious history. Created by Congress in 1792 as a "sub-legion," it became the Third Regiment with a reorganization of the army in 1796. The regiment's mission was to protect the country's frontiers.<sup>25</sup> The history of the Third and Fort Snelling would be intertwined off and on until the Second World War.

Colonel E. C. Mason, who commanded the post from the arrival of the Third Infantry until his retirement in 1896, moved the Third's headquarters to the building (67) that had been headquarters for the Department of Dakota. Enlisted men moved into the barracks that were recently constructed along Taylor Avenue. The old quarters in the original fort were occupied by an ordnance department previously stationed at Fort Abraham Lincoln in North Dakota. Within a few years, though, the commandant had other plans for the old fort, "earnestly recommend[ing] that the wall which surrounded the fort be restored to its original form, [and] that the interior be reserved as a museum for the preservation of all manner of souvenirs and relics of the early days of the Northwest." It was perhaps at this time that crenelations were added to the Round Tower's parapet in a misguided attempt at "restoration."<sup>26</sup>

The Spanish-American War uprooted the Third from Fort Snelling. The regiment returned briefly to the fort between campaigns in Cuba and Leech Lake, Minnesota, but it was to be away from Minnesota for nearly two decades when it left for the Philippines in January 1902.<sup>27</sup>

The three Minnesota National Guard regiments pledged for the Spanish-American War assembled at the state fair grounds in Saint Paul rather than at Fort Snelling. The National Guard, however, had a long association with Fort Snelling. Although its roots went back to the Minnesota Pioneer Guards, established in Saint Paul in 1856, the guard gained prominence as the Minnesota Militia during the Civil War and in contemporary conflicts

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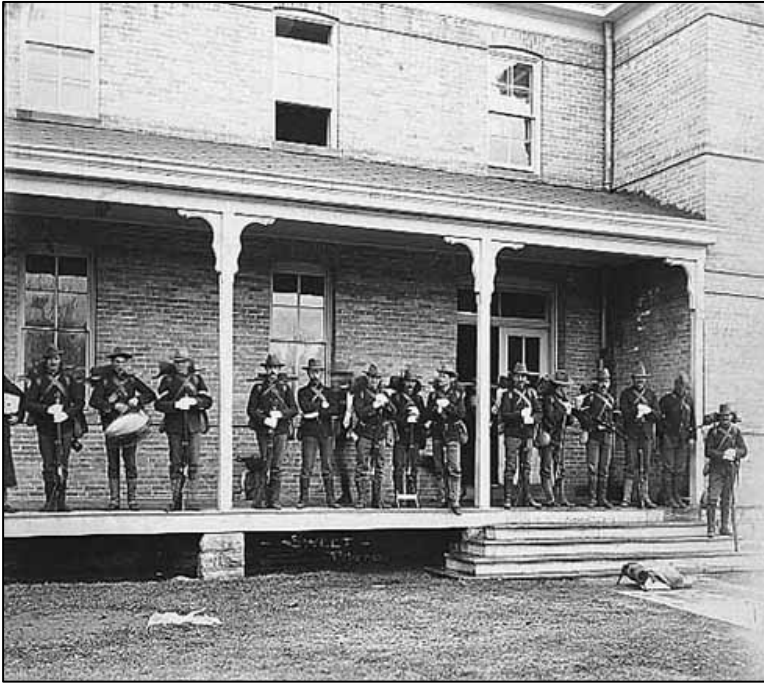
<sup>24</sup> Adjutant General to the Commanding General, Division of the Missouri, Chicago, July 27, 1887, available in NA-MHS, Box 10, File 5; Edward A. Bromley, "Historic Old Cemetery at Snelling to Be Removed for Trolley Road," *Minneapolis Evening Journal*, reprinted in *Hennepin County History*, Winder 1967, 13-15.

<sup>25</sup> "Good for Guardsmen," *Minneapolis Journal*, November 8, 1901; Theophilus F. Rodenbough and William L. Haskin, eds., *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, and Company, 1896), 432, 451.

<sup>26</sup> W. S. Harwood, "Fort Snelling, Old and New," *Harper's Weekly* 39 (1895): 442-444; "New Quarters," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, November 26, 1889.

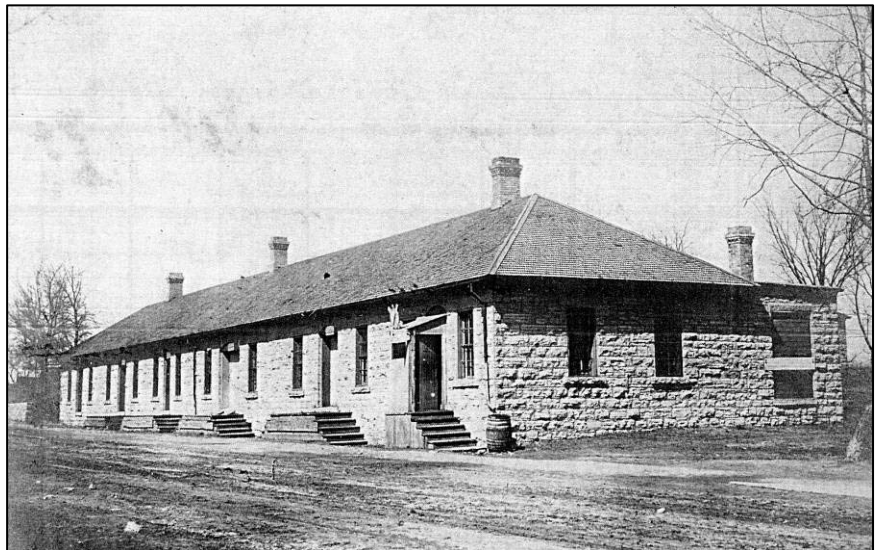
<sup>27</sup> Virginia Brainerd Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles: A Military History of Minnesota* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Statehood Centennial Commission, 1958), 120-121, 131.

with Native Americans. It became an official state organization in 1883 when a legislative act created the Minnesota National Guard with two regiments of infantry and a battery of field artillery. Although the guard trained in a variety of locations and was sometimes involved with drills with the regular army at Fort Snelling, its main training occurred at Camp Lakeview near Lake City from 1890 until the early 1930s, when it secured a new field training site near Little Falls. Company A of the Sixth Infantry, which had been stationed at Fort Snelling, moved in 1931 to the new facility, which was originally named Fort Gaines and later rechristened Camp Ripley. The guard held its first summer encampment there two years later.<sup>28</sup>



*Left: Third Infantry, preparing to leave Fort Snelling for Cuban campaign, 1898. (Louis D. Sweet, photographer; Minnesota Historical Society)*

*Below: Ordnance storehouse, Building 22. (Quartermaster Records)*



<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 115-116, 165-167; Minnesota National Guard, "History," at <http://www.minnesotanationalguard.org/history/history.php#1866>.

## THE ARMY REORGANIZES AS AMERICA COMES OF AGE

The twentieth century brought the United States—and the army, ready or not—to the international stage. With the unprecedented rate of America's growth and the various conflicts, external and internal, that characterized its history in the nineteenth century, the army's structure confounded systematic reorganization. By the end of the century, though, leaders of private industry were becoming impatient with the military's inability to keep pace with the scientific management approaches being applied to American business. "In effect," Hewes observed, "the War Department was little more than a hydra-headed holding company, an arrangement industrialists were finding increasingly wasteful and inefficient."<sup>29</sup>

The army's bumbling during the Spanish-American War was the last straw, but its performance should not have come as a surprise. After the Civil War, the size of the force had been drastically reduced. The first volume of *American Military History*, published by the army's Center of Military History, noted that "during the quarter of a century preceding 1898, . . . the Army averaged only about 26,000 officers and men, most of whom were scattered widely across the country in company- and battalion-size organizations." Although the army had sought to reduce its facilities, it met with little success because of pressure from politicians to keep their local posts. "Consequently, the Army rarely had had an opportunity for training and experience in the operation of units larger than a regiment. Moreover, the service lacked a mobilization plan, a well-knit higher staff, and experience in carrying on joint operations with the Navy. The National Guard was equally ill prepared. Though the Guard counted over 100,000 members, most units were poorly trained and inadequately equipped." Things only got worse during the course of the Spanish-American War as the number of personnel rose to about 59,000 regular soldiers and 216,000 volunteers.<sup>30</sup>

Elihu Root, who had worked as a corporate lawyer in New York, became secretary of war in 1899, aiming to overhaul the system that had evolved in the decades since Calhoun had served in that role. The timing was propitious. As America's frontier closed and the country came of age, the military moved from managing wilderness outposts to protecting an empire. Root consulted with a number of military advisors after he took office. "Concluding that after all the true object of any army must be 'to provide for war,' Root took prompt steps to reshape the American Army into an instrument of national power capable of coping with the requirements of modern warfare," according to *American Military History*. Armed with the findings of an investigative commission led by Grenville Dodge, Root proposed to create a chief of staff with duties comparable to a chief executive officer of a corporation. Assisted by a general staff of hand-picked officers, the chief was responsible for both managing existing operations and planning for anticipated future scenarios. The ineffective role of commanding general would be abolished and the chief of staff, an army professional, would be the army's liaison with the secretary of war and president. Congress adopted Root's recommendations

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<sup>29</sup> Hewes, *From Root to McNamara*, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 343-344.

for the chief of staff and general staff in February 1903, but did not merge some of the departments as Root had requested.<sup>31</sup>

To implement his vision, Root was given more men. Before the Spanish-American War, the army was organized into were eight departments, including the Department of Dakota, which together held twenty-five regiments of infantry, ten of cavalry, and five of artillery. After the war, Congress authorized thirty infantry regiments, fifteen cavalry regiments, and a corps of artillery, a total of some 100,000 officers and men. The actual force, though, averaged closer to 75,000, with about one-third of this number stationed abroad, including periodic intervention in unstable Cuba.<sup>32</sup>

Root also pressed for a reorganization of the National Guard, still functioning under the authority of the Militia Act of 1792. He got his wish when Congress passed the Dick Act in 1903, creating two classes of militia: the National Guard and the Reserve. During a five-year transition, the army would provide equipment and assistance to bring the guard into conformance with Regular Army standards. “The Dick Act made federal funds available; prescribed drill at least twice a month, supplemented with short annual training periods; permitted detailing of regular officers to Guard units; and directed the holding of joint maneuvers each year.” It was not until 1908, though, that another law authorized use of the guard for federal service as needed.<sup>33</sup>

The Reserve gained momentum when Congress established the Medical Reserve Corps in 1908, which maintained a cohort of civilian medical personal that could be called into service to supplement army doctors in case of war or other emergencies. “This was the small and humble beginning of the U.S. Army Reserve that in the future would train, commission, mobilize, and retain hundreds of thousands of officers. . . . The U.S. Army Reserve was to be a federal reserve, not belonging to the states.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 369-370; Hewes, *From Root to McNamara*, 6-11.

<sup>32</sup> Rodenbough and Haskin, eds., *The Army of the United States*, 65; Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 373. The numbers of officers and soldiers in a given unit and the number of units forming a larger unit changed over time. The infantry, artillery, and cavalry often use different names to denote units of comparable levels in their hierarchies. In the infantry, the company is the smallest unit, holding approximately one hundred enlisted men on average. Companies form regiments, regiments form brigades, brigades form divisions, and divisions form corps. In the artillery, the battery is the equivalent to the army’s company, and a collection of batteries create a battalion. Like the army, the cavalry has companies (often called troops), regiments, brigades, and divisions.

<sup>33</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 373; Paul A. Melchert, “The Minnesota Code of Military Justice—Past, Present, and Future,” typescript, [1976], 7, available at Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>34</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 374.

## FORT SNELLING REDEFINED: EXPANSION IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

As part of a major reorganization after the Spanish-American War, the army eliminated some posts and strengthened others. Fort Snelling was among the latter, but only through the tireless lobbying of local politicians and civic leaders. There was a history of collaboration between the post and the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce that dated from before the war. Colonel John Page, who succeeded Mason as commander of the post, wrote to C. F. Mahler, chair of the chamber's Committee on State Affairs, on December 31, 1897: "The main object of your committee should be to have this post designated as a Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry Post and its probable garrison." Page went on to describe the existing facilities at the fort, praising the four 1889 brick infantry barracks, which could hold eight companies, and nineteen officers' quarters at the Upper Post. He then discussed seventeen other officers' quarters "located in the 'Lower Post,' about one half mile from the barracks of the companies. With one exception, they are double houses. They were constructed in great haste about twenty years ago, are mere shells, and while they are now in fair state of repair, they will last but a few years longer, and should not be considered as a part of the quarters of a permanent post."<sup>35</sup>

Another plan explored by the chamber was to add a major medical facility at the fort "for reception of sick and wounded soldiers, especially from regiments enrolled in adjoining states." A representative from the Third Infantry wrote: "To transform the large costly brick barracks in [the] upper garrison into sick wards, I do not consider advisable." He advocated, instead, for the construction of new buildings for the hospital, while "the hospital staff proper could be housed in officers' quarters, not now used, in [the] lower post."<sup>36</sup>

The Spanish-American War apparently delayed progress on improvements to Fort Snelling, but the chamber was not deterred. In 1900, the group urged construction of a new quartermaster and commissary storehouse, a railroad station, barracks for four additional companies of infantry, quarters for bachelor officers, a drill hall, and a gymnasium. A chamber report added that "the grading of streets, leveling of grounds, planting of trees and beautifying of the reservation, has been greatly neglected. These improvements are greatly needed, and have been repeatedly and earnestly urged."<sup>37</sup>

Frederick C. Stevens, who began representing Ramsey County in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1897, was a dedicated advocate for the fort and energetically promoted the use of the facility for any initiative proposed by the army. Although not always getting everything he wanted, Stevens succeeded in maintaining a steady flow of funds to Fort Snelling and managed to keep it off the chopping block when the army underwent one of its many reorganizations. His position on an influential committee no doubt bolstered his

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<sup>35</sup> Colonel John Page, Third Infantry, Post Commander, to C. F. Mahler, Chamber of Commerce, Saint Paul, December 31, 1897, in Box 2, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Records, 1859-1950, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter cited as Saint Paul Chamber Records).

<sup>36</sup> Wm. Temesh[?], Captain Third Infantry, Commanding Post, to Major John Espy, E. V. Appleby, and J. H. Beck, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce Committee, June 8, 1898, in Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records.

<sup>37</sup> Report dated December 10, 1900, in Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records.



persuasive talents. After one victory, he wrote to an associate: “The war department has dealt with us very liberally, and my position as a member of the committee on military affairs has been of very great benefit.”<sup>38</sup>

When Congress authorized the secretary of war to identify locations for four training facilities for the Regular Army and National Guard around the country in 1901, Stevens and other local boosters immediately worked to have one at Fort Snelling. Once again, the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce sprang into action, enlisting other groups and individuals from both Saint Paul and Minneapolis. “The locating of this Training School at the Fort is of very great importance to this City, and no stone should be left unturned to accomplish it,” wrote Benjamin Beardsley, secretary of the Saint Paul Consolidated Committee. A memorial advocating for the enlargement of the fort and its selection as one of the training sites was signed by the governor, the majors of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and a variety of commercial groups and business leaders. In November 1901, Archbishop John Ireland, Senator Knute Nelson, and Thomas Cochran presented the memorial directly to Secretary Root, who acknowledged the fort’s strategic importance but found its physical size limiting.<sup>39</sup>

There were other considerations working against the fort as well. According to a *Minneapolis Journal* dispatch from Washington, “It is hinted here, although nothing official has yet been said, that Fort Snelling is rather too far north. The summers are too short for the purpose which the department has in mind. . . . By crowding and stretching the work over a period of eight months annually at each post, it has been figured that once a year every regiment of regulars and state troops can be given the exercise and drill which the department thinks so necessary.”<sup>40</sup>

Still, Stevens was undeterred until late in 1901, when a board of general officers conducted hearings on locations for the training facilities. On December 9, Stevens wrote with disappointment to Beardsley: “I am afraid they did not give us much consideration.” There was, however, good news. The *Minneapolis Journal* had reported in November that Secretary Root had empowered the board to “recommend in detail which of existing posts shall be abandoned and which shall be enlarged to accommodate more troops. It is said at the war department that the board will almost certainly recommend the enlargement of Fort Snelling now that it has been decided that two batteries of artillery are to be stationed there.” Stevens verified this after the December hearing: “They had decided practically on the enlargement of the Post probably to three times its present facilities.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> [Benjamin Beardsley,] Secretary, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, to Representative F. C. Stevens, May 14, 1902, and F. C. Stevens to Benjamin Beardsley, Secretary, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, May 17, 1902, in Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records.

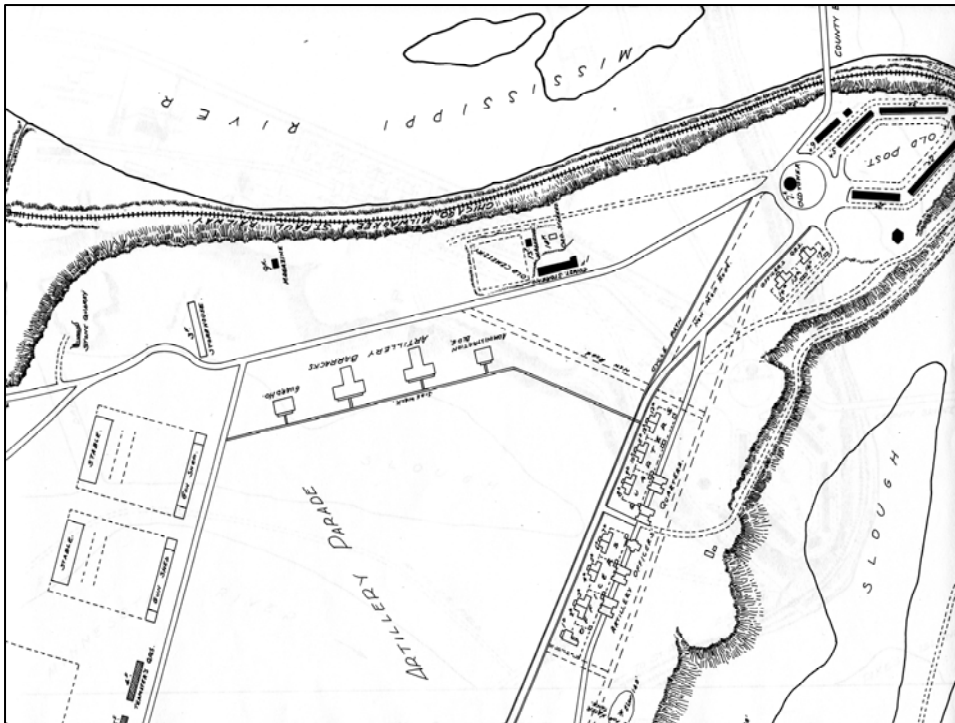
<sup>39</sup> “Tillman’s Pitchfork,” *Minneapolis Journal*, October 28, 1901. Archbishop Ireland had been the chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota Regiment during the Civil War and was Pope Leo XIII’s representative to Washington in the late 1890s to mediate between Cuba and the United States in an attempt to avoid war. Although the archbishop failed to avert the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the experience introduced him to many of the country’s leaders. (Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 117-118.)

<sup>40</sup> Benjamin F. Beardsley to J. W. Cooper, July 21, 1901, and Thomas Cochran to Congressman Stevens, November 25, 1901, at MHS, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, Be6/S150, Box 2.

<sup>41</sup> “Improving Fort Snelling,” *Minneapolis Journal*, November 12, 1901; F. C. Stevens to Benjamin F. Beardsley, December 9, 1901, in Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records.

This decision had been anticipated since the previous summer when the army had announced plans to locate two batteries of artillery, with about two hundred men and twelve fieldpieces, at Fort Snelling. A jubilant committee of the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce reported in August 1901 that “orders have been received by Maj. Geo. E. Pond, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Dakota, to make provision for the [artillery] at the Fort.” The report continued: “This will require considerable improvements to be made, as the accommodations are very limited and inadequate.” In addition, “Four companies of the Fourteenth Regiment of Infantry with band, will be stationed at Ft. Snelling, and it is greatly to be regretted, that the barracks and quarters are inadequate to accommodate any more of this regiment.” By September, the Fourteenth had arrived at the fort.<sup>42</sup>

The expansion was made official by an order from the assistant secretary of war in May 1902 raising the fort to regimental status with the addition of four infantry companies as well as the artillery units. Around the same time, Pond, who by this time had been promoted to colonel, announced plans for construction totaling about \$600,000, with about one-third of that amount to be spent by July 1903. According to the *Minneapolis Journal*, “Colonel Pond’s plans provide that the present barracks be remodeled to accommodate six companies of infantry and that quarters for six additional companies be constructed, making provisions for housing an entire regiment. Twelve sets of officers’ quarters will be erected in addition to one house for bachelor officers containing about twenty rooms, and quarters for twenty



“Proposed Scheme of Reconstruction and Enlargement to Accommodate One Regiment of Infantry and Two Batteries of Field Artillery,” submitted by Lt. General George E. Pond, March 15, 1902.

<sup>42</sup> Special Committee on Fort Snelling to the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, August 5, 1901, in Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records; “Good for Guardsmen”; “The Snelling Program,” *Minneapolis Journal*, September 27, 1901.

married commissioned officers are also provided for, with a drill hall and storehouses for grain, coal and commissary and quartermaster's supplies. . . . For artillery there will be one set of barracks for from 300 to 400 men, officers' quarters, gun sheds and stables. Water facilities will be improved by drilling artesian wells and conserving the supply from springs and a spur track from Minnehaha will be built to the store houses." Building the barracks for the artillery units, which would be arriving imminently, was the first priority because the men would have to live in tents until the buildings were ready.<sup>43</sup>

As often happened, the aggressive plans were stalled by reality. The artillery units were at the fort by September 1902 when "Lieutenant Colonel S. E. Blont of the ordnance department . . . inspected the armament of the batteries at Snelling and the work of the mechanics of the Tenth battery of artillery." The army, however, did not open bids for the barracks and other work at the fort until mid-September. Twenty-four contractors submitted bids. The lowest bidders for the main construction contracts, all from Saint Paul, included F. J. Romer and Son for "two double barracks," a hay shed, and a fire station; George J. Grant for bachelor officers' quarters, a storehouse, and the quartermaster's storehouse; N. P. Fransene and Company for "two double sets" of barracks for non-commissioned officers; and Charles Skooglund for a "stable and guardhouse." The contracts were officially awarded by the war department in late September.<sup>44</sup>

By October, the Civil War-era infantry buildings had been demolished to clear space for the artillery barracks, although their former location was still recalled by a row of maples that had once stood in front of them. In late October and early November, the *Minneapolis Journal* reported another delay for the barracks, while the government accepted bids for about \$110,000 for construction at the fort: "The artillery stables and the gun shed will be frame structures and will be erected this fall. But only the foundations will be put in for the brick buildings, the barracks and the officers' quarters." Minneapolis contractor F. G. McMillian received contracts totalling \$40,000 for the captains' quarters and stables; Timothy Reardon of Saint Paul was the primary contractor for the artillery barracks, band barracks, lieutenants' quarters, and the gunshed. Smaller contracts were given to other companies to install plumbing, electric wiring, heating, and gas piping. The two artillery barracks were finally completed in 1903. The *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* described the buildings, designed to "accommodate a battery each. They are two stories high and are built of red brick with Kettle river sandstone foundation. Long wooden verandas, supported by large white pillars, are the only features which break the regularity of the exterior."<sup>45</sup>

The artillery units shared the post with the Twenty-first Infantry. In September 1903, a newspaper announced that "Major Hearne of the Twenty-first infantry will receive a sword to-day at Fort Snelling as a gift from the officers and men of Company E." In November,

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<sup>43</sup> W. W. Jermane, "New Buildings for Snelling," *Minneapolis Journal*, April 23, 1902.

<sup>44</sup> "Bids Are Opened," *Minneapolis Journal*, September 17, 1903; "The Lowest Bids," *Minneapolis Journal*, September 19, 1903; "Snelling Contracts Let," *Minneapolis Journal*, September 26, 1903.

<sup>45</sup> "Make Snelling Accessible," *Minneapolis Journal*, May 14, 1902; Edward A. Bromley, "Extension of Street Car Line to Fort Snelling Will Pass Over Ground Long since Historic," *Minneapolis Sunday Times*, October 26, 1902; "Draws Two Prizes," *Minneapolis Journal*, October 25, 1902; "Snelling Contracts," *Minneapolis Journal*, November 4, 1902; "Improvements Will Not Change Fort Snelling," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, July 19, 1903; "Work Progresses at Fort Snelling," *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, October 25, 1903.

“sixty recruits for the Twenty-first infantry were received at Fort Snelling. . . . They came from Columbus barracks, Ohio, in charge of Major George R. Cecil of the Third infantry.” The Twenty-first, comprising about 450 officers and enlisted men, had left by November 1904 and were replaced by ten companies of the Twenty-eighth Infantry, which had been stationed in San Francisco since their return from service in the Philippines earlier in the year. “The addition of the 750 officers and men of the Twenty-eighth to the number of men now stationed at Fort Snelling will bring the total number to 1,000.”<sup>46</sup>

In January 1903 Congress appropriated \$25,000 for a post exchange building. Within the year, another \$1.5 million was on its way. By this time, plans for the fort had grown again with authorization for a squadron (four companies) of cavalry. “This will make Fort Snelling about the same capacity of Fort Sheridan, near Chicago,” Congressman Stevens wrote to Beardsley, with “accommodations for over 1,500 private soldiers and about 80 officers and probably about 200 civilians. There would be about 700 horses kept at such a post.” In October 1903, the *Saint Paul Globe* predicted a slightly smaller total of 1,300 men—“800 infantry, 250 cavalry, and the same number of artillery”—but ranked Snelling over Sheridan: “When the work now contemplated is finished, only two posts in the country, Fort Leavenworth . . . and Fort Riley can be compared with [Fort Snelling] either in point of number of its garrison strength or in the fineness and completeness of its buildings and equipment.”<sup>47</sup>

Pond provided yet another estimate, which was probably the most authoritative one, given his role as quartermaster at the fort: “The present Fort Snelling is a garrison of eight companies or two battalions of infantry, of 640 men as a maximum; there are at present at the post, about 90 animals. The improvements which are authorized and now under way will make the post a garrison to consist of one regiment, or twelve companies, of infantry = 980 men; two batteries of light artillery = 240 men; and one squadron, or four troops, of cavalry = 320 men; or a grand total of 1,540 men. The present number of officers, with their families, is 33; with the increased garrison there will be 80. The number of animals will be increased from 90 to 660.” Pond was concerned about how to supply sufficient food, particularly for the animals, given the limited rail connections. “I am just completing a spur-track of a mile and a half, which is Government property,” but it was connected to a line monopolized by the Chicago, Minneapolis and Saint Paul Railroad. “We would be only too glad to give the use of this track to any and all railroads which may enter our reservation.”<sup>48</sup>

In the meantime, Congressman Stevens and others were working to enlarge the fort’s 1,531 acres to provide sufficient space for an artillery range, drill fields, and other facilities. An attempt to keep the efforts quiet to avoid land speculation was foiled when news of the plan became public in the summer of 1903. Property owners adjacent to the fort demanded

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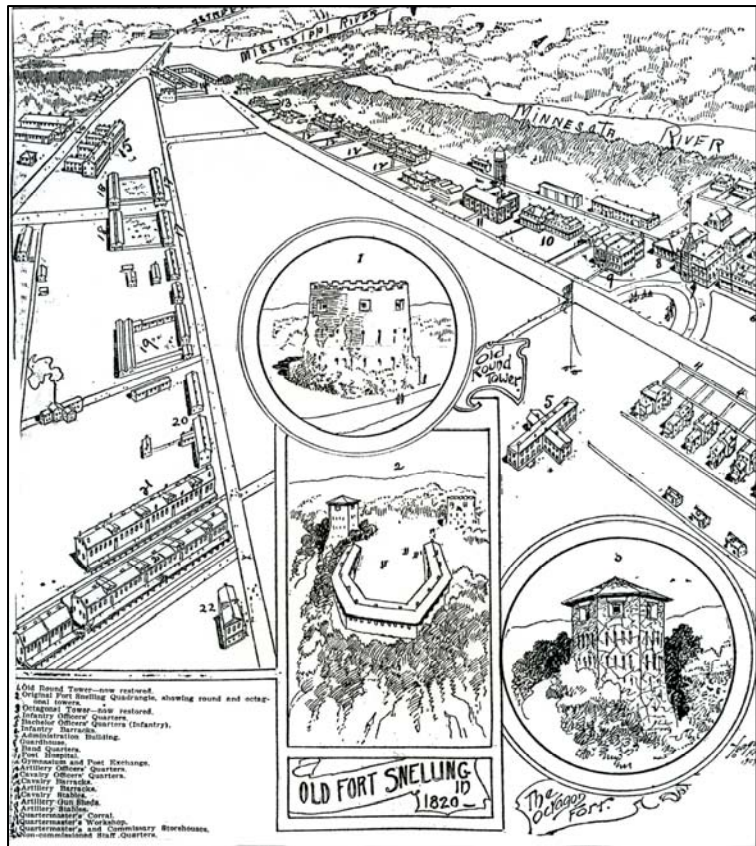
<sup>46</sup> “Bids Are Opened”; “Snelling Contracts”; “The New Garrison,” *Minneapolis Journal*, November 3, 1904.

<sup>47</sup> “The New Era, 1900-1917,” typescript, in Box B, Fort Snelling research materials, 1860-1974, Lawrence Fuller Collection, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter cited as Fuller Collection); Saint Paul Consolidated Committee, July 21, 1901, Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records; Representative Stevens to Benjamin Beardsley, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, June 9, 1903, Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records; “Story of the Origin and Growth of Fort Snelling,” *Saint Paul Globe*, October 4, 1903.

<sup>48</sup> Deputy Quartermaster George E. Pond to Benjamin F. Beardsley, Secretary, Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, June 5, 1903, Box 2, Saint Paul Chamber Records.

inflated prices, leading to lawsuits and a court-appointed valuation commission. In March 1904, the disputes had stopped progress on the fort's expansion: "No effort will be made by the war department to enlarge the facilities at Fort Snelling by the construction of new buildings until the land question is settled," the *Minneapolis Journal* announced. "From the attitude of the owners . . . , there is little prospect that the government will get possession of [the land] until the case has gone thru several courts." By April 1905, the government was set to pay about \$122,000 to some fifty owners of over 800 acres of land. It was not until October 1908 that the post's commandant was authorized to proceed with construction of a rifle range on the hard-won land. In 1911, the fort received \$10,000 for additional improvements to the target ranges.<sup>49</sup>

By this time, the facilities at the fort had changed significantly. In April 1904, the *Minneapolis Journal* listed recently completed structures including the "post exchange and gymnasium, fire station, commissary and quartermasters' storehouses, stable, guard building, hay sheds, two artillery stables each holding 106 horses, two gun sheds about 150 feet square, two artillery barracks, sets of officers' quarters, two double sets of non-commissioned staff officers' quarters. A pumphouse and water tank have been built, and the sewer and water systems extended to the new buildings. An electric plant and system costing \$25,000 has been installed and is now running 5,000 incandescent lights in addition to the arc lights used in lighting the post grounds. The parade grounds, which were formerly rough, have been graded and seeded, and shade trees have been set out thruout the reservation."<sup>50</sup>



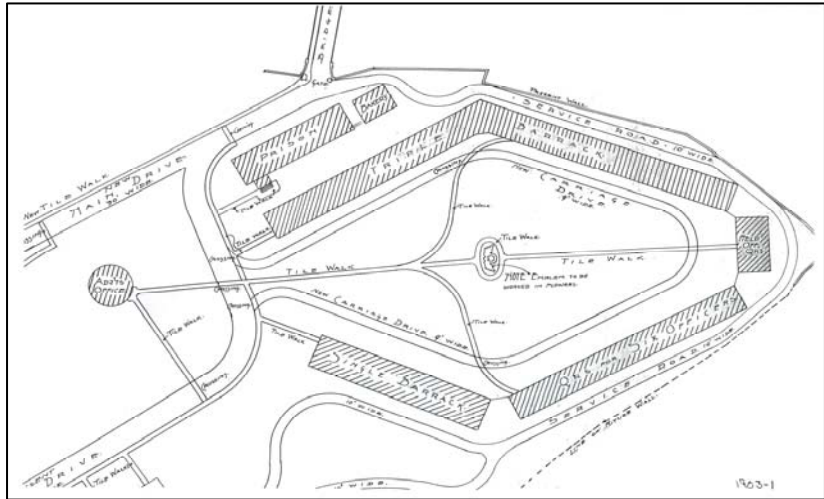
"The Building Up of Fort Snelling,"  
*Saint Paul Globe*, July 3, 1904.

<sup>49</sup> W. W. Jermaine, "May Spoil Snelling Plan," *Minneapolis Journal*, May 31, 1902; W. W. Jermaine, "To Enlarge Snelling," *Minneapolis Journal*, June 23, 1902; "Stop Ft. Snelling Work," *Minneapolis Journal*, March 21, 1904; Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, *Thirty-sixth Annual Report, June 1904* (Saint Paul: published by the chamber, 1904), 41; "Pay for Snelling Land," *Minneapolis Journal*, April 26, 1905; "Purchased for Snelling," *Minneapolis Journal*, May 1, 1905; "Will Build Rifle Range," *Minneapolis Journal*, October 5, 1908; W. W. Jermaine, "Fort Snelling Gets \$10,000," *Minneapolis Journal*, April 23, 1911.

<sup>50</sup> "Making Snelling Over," *Minneapolis Journal*, April 6, 1904.

The same article announced that “work started yesterday on the ‘bachelors’ row’ of the officers. These will be located just off the main street and facing the infantry parade ground. Two double sets of infantry barracks accommodating 400 men will be built on the main street.” Planning was also underway for quarters for four troops of cavalry, occupying “what is known as the old post near the bridge.”<sup>51</sup>

Given the army’s increasing insistence on standardization, the initial plan that Pond submitted for the fort’s 250-man cavalry unit is surprising. The plan placed the cavalry in the much remodeled and reconstructed old fort. A drawing prepared in 1903 by the fort’s construction quartermaster, Captain R. M. Schofield, showed a “triple barrack”—a massive, angled building, along the north and west side of the old parade ground. A single barrack was along the south side, and a longer building with quarters for six officers filled in the east side. The field officer was to reside in the former commandant’s house. A carriage drive looped in front of the buildings and a service road ran behind them. The Round Tower was to be transformed into the adjutant’s office and the Hexagon Tower retained for a storehouse.<sup>52</sup>



*“Plan of Proposed Roads and Sidewalks at Lower Post, Fort Snelling, Minn.,” prepared under the direction of Capt. R. M. Schofield, constructing quartermaster, 1903.*

Although the cavalry had initially planned to move into their new campus early in 1904, the work was apparently delayed. The plan was only slightly changed in July of that year when the *Saint Paul Globe* printed a large sketch map showing the new configuration of the old fort (see illustration on previous page). Although the perspective was rather distorted, the map showed quarters for the cavalry officers at the base of Taylor Avenue, just outside the walls of the original post, with a U-shaped cavalry barracks occupying most of the interior of the old fort. Two cavalry stables, their gabled ends fronting on Tower Avenue, were behind the artillery barracks, just west of another structure, probably Building 22. Along with two other buildings, probably stable guardhouses, these were the only structures north of Tower Avenue.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Major General James F. McKinley to Charles Stees, September 12, 1934, in “Fort Snelling 1920s 30s 40s” file, Fort Snelling Visitor Center; “Story of the Origin and Growth of Fort Snelling”; Captain R. M. Schofield, “Plan of Proposed Roads and Sidewalks at Lower Post, Fort Snelling, Minnesota,” 1903, at Fort Snelling Visitor Center.

<sup>53</sup> “The Building Up of Fort Snelling,” *Saint Paul Globe*, July 3, 1904.



“Improvements Will Not Change Fort Snelling,” a headline in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* announced, adding that for “the remodeling work great care is being taken to preserve the historic view rather than to emphasize what is new.” The army’s definitions of change and preservation, however, were to prove controversial: “The buildings will be covered with plaster of a color suggestive of old age,” “probably light yellow,” the newspaper reported. “Moorish architecture will replace the present nondescript. . . . All the buildings will be made two stories and will have uniform roofs of red slate with terra cotta copings. In front of the buildings, at intervals of twelve feet, there will be Moorish columns forming a continuous colonnade, and there will be a tiled promenade around the entire post. There will be balconies at the rear of the reconstructed barracks, which will command views of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.” “Stables,” the article added, “will be erected near those underway for . . . the artillery.”<sup>54</sup>

In September 1903, the quartermaster authorized Schofield to request proposals for the work. Neither Schofield nor Pond likely anticipated the public outrage that implementation of the plans ignited. While the commandant’s house and officers quarters were given a makeover “in the Spanish mission style, with red tile roofs and long arcades,” according to a contemporary account, early preservationists stopped demolition of “two double sets of officers quarters, opposite the old tower” that were supposed to be replaced by “brick quarters similar to those erected for the artillery officers.” The *Saint Paul Globe* raged: “Once started on its remodeling career the war department has grotesquely wrecked the venerable fort and grotesquely transformed what it did not wreck.”<sup>55</sup>

The greatest anger was aroused when the Round Tower was sheathed in stucco. Even before this alteration, the tower was not in pristine condition. Iron bars had been installed in the windows of the building, which had most recently served as a guardhouse. Crenellations had been added to the structure’s parapet, and the walls that once surrounded the fort were gone. These changes, though, only seemed to reinforce the “semi-mediaeval inspiration of the whole,” in the words of a *Saint Paul Globe* writer. After the stuccoing, “the whole tower appears to have been cast in a pastry cook’s tin mold, like a Christmas cake all ready for the frosting.” A headline in the *New Ulm Review* read: “Interesting Monument at Snelling Is Mummified.” The *Minneapolis Journal* described “How the Pioneers’ Dearest Shrine Has Been Desecrated”: “The old Round Tower, in its new jacket, is less attractive than one of the new cylindrical grain tanks which it resembles more than anything else.” The interior had also been modified with “hardwood floors, electric lights, plate glass windows, steam radiators—all these sound as historic and as romantic as a tomato can.”<sup>56</sup>

Despite the public outcry, when a *Minneapolis Journal* reporter asked Pond if the stucco would be removed, his response was: “Most certainly not.” He indicated that the windows,

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<sup>54</sup> “Improvements Will Not Change Fort Snelling.”

<sup>55</sup> McKinley to Stees; “The Building Up of Fort Snelling”; “Work Progresses at Fort Snelling”; untitled article, *Saint Paul Globe*, October 9, 1904.

<sup>56</sup> Untitled article, *Saint Paul Globe*, October 9, 1904; “Interesting Monument at Snelling Is Mummified,” *New Ulm (Minn.) Review*, October 12, 1904; “How the Pioneers’ Dearest Shrine Has Been Desecrated,” *Minneapolis Journal*, October 29, 1904.

floors, and other elements of the “restoration” were necessary concessions for the building’s new use as an office. The Minnesota Historical Society came to the rescue, however, stopping further implementation of Pond’s grand scheme and forcing removal of the stucco from the Round Tower. The building’s interior, however, was consigned to functional use for decades thereafter, at one point serving as the residence for the post’s civilian electrician. It did not open as a museum until March 1941, after a renovation by federal relief workers.<sup>57</sup>

Buildings 17 and 18 were apparently conceived when Pond’s “restoration” of the old fort was stopped. On July 8, 1904, the *Minneapolis Journal* announced that instead of remodeling the old barracks in the original fort, the army would demolish some structures and build two new barracks “just above the bridge on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi river.” Work would go ahead as planned to complete the renovation of some of the old fort’s buildings for officers’ quarters.<sup>58</sup>



*Round Tower and new barracks, ca. 1905.  
(Library of Congress)*

The cavalry barracks, like most of the new buildings at the fort, featured standard plans, which were used for the majority of the new construction associated with the army’s expansion campaign. The Quartermaster General’s Office in Washington, D.C., prepared and distributed these plans, which were mostly developed in the 1890s. According to the army’s “National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations, 1790-1940,” “the Quartermaster Department adapted Colonial Revival architecture for buildings constructed during the first decade of the twentieth century. The new construction often retained the building forms from the Victorian era, but displayed Georgian Colonial Revival motifs such as modillioned cornices and Tuscan-columned porches.”<sup>59</sup>

There was little leeway for modification of the standard plans. In work being done on Fort Benjamin Harrison, for example, the Quartermaster General’s Office directed Construction Quartermaster B. F. Cheatham “to follow all plans scrupulously and to request permission for the slightest departures from these plans.” This work was started in 1904, concurrent with Fort Snelling’s construction campaign.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> “The Building Up of Fort Snelling”; “Pond Put Cement on Round Tower,” *Minneapolis Journal*, November 9, 1904; “Old Round Tower May Be Restored,” *Minneapolis Times*, November 10, 1904; “Mrs. Thomas Marcum, wife of the post’s civilian electrical engineer, seated in her living room in the Round Tower,” photograph, 1937, at Minnesota Historical Society (MH5.9 F1.4R r23); “Headline History of Fort Snelling during the Year 1941,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, January 9, 1942.

<sup>58</sup> H. C. Stevens, “New Barracks Plans Have Been Approved,” *Minneapolis Journal*, July 8, 1904.

<sup>59</sup> Goodwin, “National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations,” 1:181.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



Barracks were key buildings in the composition of a garrison, as the “National Historic Context” explains: “Barracks . . . became important elements in the installation plan and often were impressive buildings that defined the architectural character of the installation.” The study notes that “barracks were usually one- to three-story, rectangular buildings, with the primary entrance on the wider elevation. Verandas were a common feature until the 1930s.” In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, barracks were most commonly built for two companies. These double barracks were split by a firewall, with mirror images of the same plan on each side of the solid wall. “They typically had a central block flanked by wings with two-tiered porches. Porches served as corridors and provided ventilation. . . . On installations that served more than one branch of the Army, the barracks were designated as cavalry, artillery, or infantry barracks.”<sup>61</sup>

The report includes a photograph of a cavalry barracks constructed in 1910 at Fort D. A. Russell (now F. E. Warren Air Force Base). The two-company barracks appear identical to Buildings 17 and 18, although the building’s design is attributed to a slightly different standard plan (75-M, in contrast to 75-G or 75-C at Fort Snelling). The “Context Study of the United States Quartermaster General Standardized Plans, 1866-1942” references Plan 75-G as a double barracks, 39 feet by 150 feet, citing the example built in 1904 at Fort McPherson. Interestingly, the study credits George Pond, who was responsible for stuccoing the Round Tower, with plans for a number of buildings at Fort Riley, Kansas, including cavalry barracks and stables.<sup>62</sup>

By early November 1904, Fort Snelling’s new cavalry barracks were under construction. They would be ready for “three troops of cavalry in the spring,” the *Minneapolis Journal* noted: “Troop E, now at Boise barracks, Idaho; and Troops G and H, now at Fort Apache, Ariz. There will be about 200 officers and men.” While it is not clear if or when Troop E reached Fort Snelling, Troops G and H of the Third Cavalry, comprising about four officers and 144 enlisted men, arrived at Fort Snelling on June 14, 1905. By the end of the year they had left for the Philippines, via San Francisco, switching places with a squadron (Troops I, K, L,



*Cavalry barracks, Fort Snelling, ca. 1905.  
(Library of Congress)*

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 2:315-316.

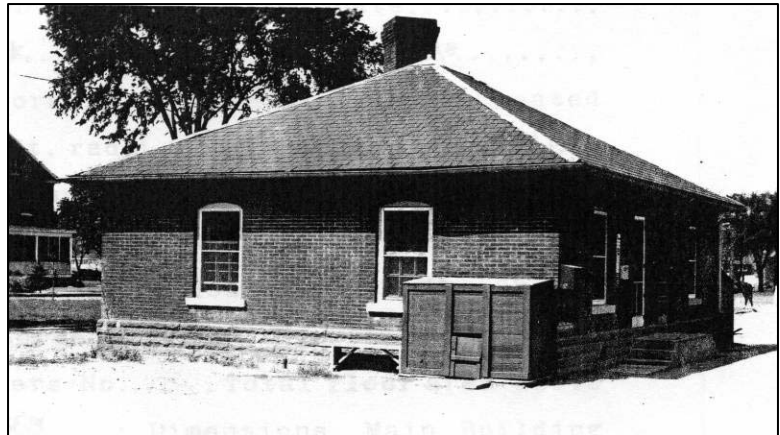
<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 2:327; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, “Context Study of the United States Quartermaster General Standardized Plans, 1866-1942,” prepared for the U.S. Army Environmental Center Environmental Compliance Division, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, November 1997, 388-390. For Buildings 17 and 18 (originally K-11 and K-12, respectively), the quartermaster inventory sheets, copies of which are at the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, give the dimensions of each “main building” as 44 feet by 150 feet and each wing as 39 feet by 59 feet. A later notation seems to indicate that the plan was 75-C rather than 75-G but provides no explanation for this assertion. Specific information on buildings at Fort Snelling in the following pages is from the quartermaster reports, unless otherwise indicated.

and M) of the Second Cavalry, which reached Fort Snelling in February 1906 and moved into the barracks vacated by the Third.<sup>63</sup>

The four brick cavalry stables (Buildings 25, 27, 28, and 30) and two brick stable guardhouses (Buildings 26 and 29) were of the same vintage. They seem to have been produced from a standard plan, but quartermaster records do not indicate the plan number.

The “Context Study of the United States Quartermaster General Standardized Plans, 1866-1942” explains: “Stables typically were long, rectangular, gable-roofed structures, with doors at the end elevations and windows along the side elevations. Most surviving examples were built of brick or stone. The stables for different branches are located in distinct areas of the post. . . . Cavalry and artillery stables were constructed generally as separate complexes consisting of stables, stable guardhouses, and blacksmith shop. . . . Cavalry and artillery stables are characterized by monitor roofs and, at permanent installations, by a greater degree of architectural detailing than that found on other types of stables.” The study also mentions that

“guardhouses typically were simple, one-story buildings that matched the stables in construction materials and character.” The 67-foot by 160-foot stables at Fort Snelling each had eighty-two stalls. They were completed in 1904. In October 1905, a board of officers examined a new fire escape system that had been installed for the horses: “By an arrangement of ropes and pulleys, one man is enabled to back all the horses out of their stalls and lead them from the stable building.”<sup>64</sup>



*Fort Snelling cavalry stable (above) and guardhouse (below).  
(Quartermaster Records)*

<sup>63</sup> “The New Garrison”; “To the Philippines,” *Minneapolis Journal*, November 11, 1905; “Second Cavalry Coming,” *Minneapolis Journal*, January 4, 1906.

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, “Context Study of the United States Quartermaster General Standardized Plans, 336-338; “To Test Horse Fire Escape,” *Minneapolis Journal*, October 13, 1905.

With the barracks and stables up and running, the most pressing outstanding need was for a drill hall for the cavalry and artillery. The cavalry won out, getting a building exclusively for its use (Building 201). In June 1906, a headline in the *Minneapolis Journal* proclaimed: “Riding Hall Assured.” The accompanying article explained that “thru the efforts of Congressman F. C. Stevens congress appropriated \$50,000 for the hall.” He also obtained additional funds so that “old walks are being put in repair . . . and new ones are being laid. Work is to begin soon on four sets of quarters for non-commissioned officers in the rear of the administration building facing the river.” A subsequent article included an illustration of the planned hall, explaining that “this new type of drill hall was evolved after careful study by the experts in the office of the quartermaster general of the army.” The drill hall, which cost about \$43,000, was ready in October 1907. In addition to using the hall for regular training, the cavalry sometimes opened the facility for public shows. On Thursday afternoons in early 1910, for example, the troops held a series of public shows that were described in a newspaper article as a “Free Circus at Fort Snelling.” In addition to standard drills, the teams engaged in “monkey work” such as pyramids of men balanced on prancing horses and horses “shaking hands” with their trainers.<sup>65</sup>

It is noteworthy that the drill hall got a prime location on the parade grounds. While the army became ever more reliant on standard building plans, it was less prescriptive when it came to the layout of a complex. Posts were supposed to be “attractive,” but specifics were few and far between. The most common configuration continued to be that used throughout the nineteenth century—a central parade ground ringed by key buildings, with secondary structures to the rear. “Barracks,” the context study observes, “are located in prominent sites, generally in groups facing the parade ground or drill field.”<sup>66</sup>

The drill hall and artillery barracks at Fort Snelling had followed that pattern, claiming a prime location on the parade grounds, the ceremonial heart of the fort. The siting of the cavalry barracks in the Lower Post area was presumably related to the ill-fated attempt to convert the 1820s post into a Spanish village for the cavalry. In any event, they were on the north side of Tower Avenue, where their visual relationship with the parade grounds was partially obstructed by the artillery barracks. The growth of trees along Tower and Wilkinson Avenues further obscured the visual connection. The presence of Buildings 17 and 18 was also



*Fort Snelling cavalry barracks, n.d.  
(Fuller Collection)*

<sup>65</sup> “Want Roads to Trade in Minne,” *Minneapolis Journal*, April 29, 1904; “Riding Hall Assured,” *Minneapolis Journal*, June 8, 1906; “Cavalry and Artillery Drill Hall to Be Erected at Fort Snelling,” *Minneapolis Journal*, June 12, 1906; “Much Work in Progress,” *Minneapolis Journal*, July 12, 1907; “The New Riding Hall at Fort Snelling Ready for Breaking in Cavalry Rookies,” *Minneapolis Journal*, October 20, 1907; “Free Circus at Fort Snelling,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 25, 1910.

<sup>66</sup> Goodwin, “National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations,” 1:181 and 2:316.





Up until this time, a trolley line ran from downtown Minneapolis as far as Minnehaha Falls. The street railway company felt that continuing the line to the fort would not be profitable enough to justify the expense of building a three-mile extension to the fort. With the promise of the fort's early twentieth-century expansion, however, pressure on the company mounted. A headline in the *Minneapolis Journal* in May 1902 demanded: "Make Snelling Accessible. Elaborate Plans for Enlarging the Post Mean Also Enlarged Trade. Minneapolis Business Men Say Now's the Time to Secure Trolley Connection." The point was reinforced by quotes from Frederick Powers of the Powers Mercantile Company, L. S. Donaldson of Donaldson's Glass Block, and other major merchants in downtown Minneapolis. Saint Paul businessmen were less sanguine about the extension, the *Journal* noted: "The matter of a line to Fort Snelling has been long opposed by Saint Paul, which under present conditions enjoys the lion's share of the trade from the post." Colonel Pond gave legitimacy to their fears when he said: "I know personally that most of the people at the fort would prefer trading in Minneapolis to doing business in Saint Paul."<sup>68</sup>

In October 1902, the *Minneapolis Sunday Times* optimistically predicted that "the line undoubtedly will be built early next spring." While the route had not been chosen, the *Times* speculated that it would not follow the existing road from Minnehaha Park that "goes up over the sandy ground to the south of the Milwaukee tracks." That route "enters the Fort Snelling reservation at a point near the two water tanks, and just beyond there separates into two roads, one turning off toward the new post, and the other to the left toward the old fort, and the bridge across the Mississippi."

The army insisted that the line should not "bisect the reservation as the carriage road does at the present time." Instead, it would "proceed along the bank of the Mississippi river, passing between the stables and the river, and extending along the bluff at the rear of the old cemetery. . . . From that point it would follow a straight line to a point opposite the old round tower, and it is probable that the terminus will be on the spot formerly occupied by the post trader's store."<sup>69</sup>



*Streetcar passes by the Round Tower, ca. 1915.  
(Postcard, Minnesota Historical Society)*

The year 1903 came and went without the trolley reaching the fort, so lobbying continued into 1904. "Officers and their wives object to running the guntlet of saloons, disorderly houses and drunken men when going to town, as they have to do on the way to St. Paul," the *Minneapolis Journal* explained. "Besides, they regard Minneapolis as the better shopping

<sup>67</sup> Bromley, "Historic Old Cemetery," 13-15.

<sup>68</sup> "Make Snelling Accessible."

<sup>69</sup> Bromley, "Extension of Street Car Line."

town.” Finally, in 1905, the line reached the fort. Despite the army’s desire to have the tracks run along the bluff, they ended up edging Tower Avenue.<sup>70</sup>

Saint Paul fought back. The 1880 bridge over the Mississippi connecting the fort to Saint Paul could not support a streetcar, so travelers had to walk across the bridge to catch the line. To make it as easy to get to Saint Paul as to Minneapolis, boosters wanted a new bridge. In May 1905, a military board that had been established “to investigate transportation improvements” estimated that the bridge would cost about \$250,000. By March 1907, the secretary of war had approved plans for the structure and was pressuring Saint Paul and the Twin City Rapid Transit Company into coming up with their share of the construction funds so that erection could start that spring. The new steel deck-arch bridge over the Mississippi opened in 1909.<sup>71</sup>

By this time, after nearly a decade in the making, the expansion of Fort Snelling into a regimental post was essentially completed, although the campus continued to receive money for improvements. In 1907, Congress appropriated about \$75,000 to construct a new rifle and artillery range, update roads, and erect some small buildings. The army spent \$30,000 to expand the post’s hospital in 1908. In 1909, the post was “equipped with the most modern and scientific telephone system that it is possible to devise.” The *Saint Paul Dispatch* explained that the “monster underground conduit telephone system . . . will connect every barracks, officers’ quarters, stables and administration building with one another, and with almost the entire country.”<sup>72</sup>

A cloud hung over the fort, however, because its future was once again in limbo. In the summer of 1906, Secretary of War Taft “announced that the war department had determined to abandon many of the small posts in the west, and to enlarge several other posts to brigade capacity.” Fort Snelling was not on the list to become a brigade post. “Work Needed to Get Brigade Post” read a headline in the *Minneapolis Journal* in January 1907. Instead, things seemed to be heading in the opposite direction. By March, the army had decided to move the Tenth and Twelfth Batteries of artillery from Fort Snelling, a loss of 7 officers, 220 enlisted men, and 200 horses. The *Journal* tried to put a positive spin on the news, observing that this change “will provide quarters for a material increase in the representation of the cavalry and infantry” at the fort.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Want Roads to Trade in Minne.”

<sup>71</sup> “Work on Fort Snelling Line,” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 3, 1905; “Work at Snelling Under Way Soon,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 15, 1907.

<sup>72</sup> “Work Needed to Get Brigade Post,” *Minneapolis Journal*, January 15, 1907; “Hospital to Be Enlarged,” *Minneapolis Journal*, July 4, 1908; “New ’Phones for Snelling,” *Saint Paul Dispatch*, September 24, 1909.

<sup>73</sup> “Work Needed to Get Brigade Post”; “Snelling to Lose Artillery Troops,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 16, 1907.

## ON THE ADVENT OF WORLD WAR I

Despite efforts to reform the army, it remained mired in mediocrity. Conflicts along the Mexican border in 1911 shined a spotlight on the continuing problems. As a contemporary newspaper noted, “There are only half a dozen places where more than a regiment is ever concentrated, a few where as many as a brigade are stationed and none where there is room or accommodations for a division.” In an attempt at a show of force, the army planned to amass a division—three brigades containing about 13,000 officers and men—in San Antonio. “The effort only proved how unready the Army was to mobilize quickly for any kind of national emergency,” according to *American Military History*. “Assembly of the division required several months. The War Department had to collect Regular Army troops from widely scattered points in the continental United States and denude every post, depot, and arsenal to scrape up the necessary equipment. Even so, when the maneuver division finally completed its concentration in August 1911, it was far from fully operational: none of its regiments were up to strength or adequately armed and equipped. Fortunately, the efficiency of the division was not put to any battle test; and within a short time it was broken up and its component units returned to their home stations.” To its credit, the army learned from the 1911 experience and was able to assemble a division in less than a week when the Mexican border was again troubled two years later. The operational practice that both the Regular Army and the National Guard gained by the mobilizations against Mexico proved to be invaluable training for the first world war.<sup>74</sup>

The trouble with Mexico left Fort Snelling with a skeleton crew. “In theory there are at present stationed at Fort Snelling twelve companies of cavalry and one battery of artillery,” a *Minneapolis Journal* reporter wrote in May 1911. “Most of these troops are in fact on duty on the Mexican border.” While reports still predicted that the fort would house a brigade of twenty-eight to thirty companies “with the restoration of normal conditions,” even the perpetually optimistic Congressman Stevens had conceded by September 1911 that it might take a decade to bring Fort Snelling up to brigade status. The Second Cavalry, rather than returning to Minnesota after serving in the Mexican conflict, was sent to the Philippines. When the battalion returned to the United States the following spring, most of the men were shipped back to the Mexican border. Plans for the Twenty-eighth Infantry to be finished with Mexican border duties and move back to Fort Snelling were delayed until after that country’s elections.<sup>75</sup>

Ongoing problems with maintaining adequate forces at the southern border were not entirely the fault of the army: although its leaders wanted to consolidate scattered posts, politicians would not allow it. “Politics has brought about the cutting up of the army into infinitesimal bodies,” an editorial in the *Minneapolis Journal* stated. “As an army post is something of a

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<sup>74</sup> “Organizing the Army,” *Minneapolis Journal*, July 15, 1911; Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 374.

<sup>75</sup> W. W. Jermane, “Fort Snelling to Be Brigade Post,” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 18, 1911; “Snelling Plans Held Up,” *Minneapolis Journal*, September 5, 1911; “New Colonel at Fort Snelling,” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 21, 1912.

trade and social advantage, there would be one in every congressional district if the members had it all their own way.”<sup>76</sup>

As this indicates, Fort Snelling was not alone in having powerful political allies. Another example, Fort Des Moines, was established near its namesake city in 1901. The Iowa fort’s “genesis lay in the realm of politics, and its role as a regular army establishment fluctuated between activity and inactivity throughout its existence,” according to a Historic American Buildings Survey report. “The fort owed its beginning largely to the initiative and persuasive powers of Representative John A. T. Hull (Republican-Iowa), who, early in his second term drew upon his influence as chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs to promote his objective.” Fort Des Moines specialized in cavalry for nearly four decades, much as Fort Snelling was mostly associated with the infantry. The cavalry barracks, stables, and drill hall at the Iowa fort, all built during the first decade of the twentieth century, appear to match the design of their contemporary counterparts at Fort Snelling.<sup>77</sup>

Given the political pressure in Washington, the attempt to cut posts in 1906 had gone nowhere. The War Department tried again with more determination in 1912 when it presented a major reorganization plan to Congress. The continental army would be arranged geographically, with one cavalry division in the south and one infantry division in each of the country’s remaining quadrants. New York became headquarters for the east division, Chicago for the central division, and San Francisco for the west division. General Order No. 9, effective in February 1913, implemented this plan.<sup>78</sup>

Fort Snelling was initially among the posts targeted for closure by the War Department’s 1912 report because it no longer held a regiment, much less a brigade: the cavalry as well as the artillery companies had departed by this time, leaving the infantry as the sole occupant of the fort. Congressmen Stevens and others again jumped into the fray. In March 1912, under the headline “Snelling to Be Retained,” the *Minneapolis Journal* reported that “the war department has completed its tentative plan for the concentration of the army at enlarged garrisons in connection with the abandonment of useless army posts, and has decided that Fort Snelling is to be retained and enlarged.” When Secretary of War Henry Stimson and army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Leonard Wood, accompanied by Congressman Stevens and Governor Eberhart, made an inspection tour of the fort in September 1912, “neither official would make a direct statement as to the future of the fort, but both the secretary and General Wood stated that there is no likelihood of an abandonment of Fort Snelling for some time to come if ever, in so far as they are enabled to speak.”<sup>79</sup>

By the time that the general order took effect in 1913, Congressman Stevens confidently asserted that it “will have little bearing upon Fort Snelling.” A newspaper account explained that “Fort Snelling will be maintained and increased in size and importance. A company of

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<sup>76</sup> “Organizing the Army.”

<sup>77</sup> Jerome A. Greene and Louis W. Anderson. “Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,” Historic American Buildings Survey No. IA-121, [1997], 3.

<sup>78</sup> W. W. Jermane, “Snelling Will Be Increased in Size,” n.p., [dateline: February 3, 1913], in Frederick C. Stevens Scrapbook, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter cited as Stevens Scrapbook).

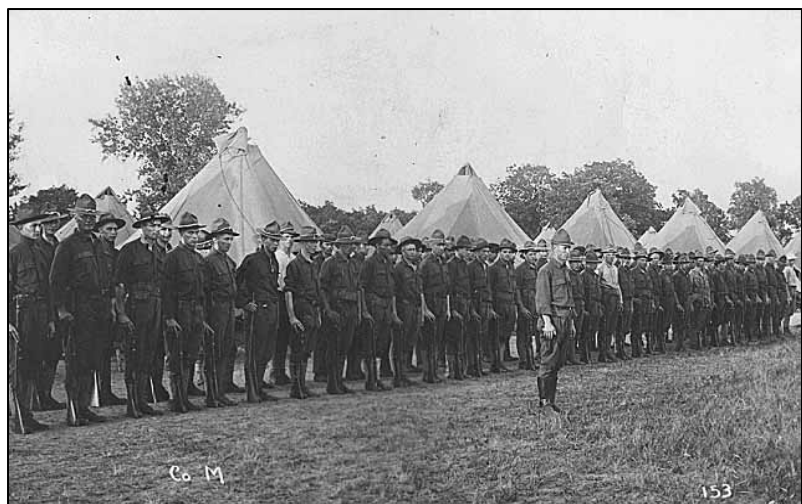
<sup>79</sup> W. W. Jermane, “Snelling to Be Retained,” *Minneapolis Journal*, March 10, 1912; “Fort Snelling’s Size Surprises War Secretary,” *Minneapolis Journal*, September 30, 1912.



the hospital corps has already been ordered to Fort Snelling to occupy one of the vacant sets of barracks and quarters designed for field artillery. It is probable that if the battalion of the Ninth infantry be ordered to rejoin the rest of its regiment troops, . . . another branch of the service will be ordered to replace them. This will maintain at Fort Snelling the several branches of the military service which is necessary in order to insure its continuance as one of the larger posts in the army.” As predicted, the Ninth Infantry troops at Fort Snelling were transferred to Fort Thomas, Kentucky, but a contingent of the Fourth Infantry from Fort Logan H. Roots in Arkansas soon replaced it.<sup>80</sup>

Minnesota did have one noteworthy loss, though, with the dissolution of the Department of Dakota and the relocation of some of its staff from Saint Paul to Omaha, Seventh Corps Area Headquarters. For a time, it looked like this loss would be offset by the designation of Fort Snelling as headquarters of the Department of the Lakes, responsible for posts in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. This office was in Chicago, but its capacity was taxed by its new role as headquarters for the central military division. As usual, “the plan to continue one of the military headquarters at Fort Snelling was decided upon largely as the result of urging by Representative Stevens.” According to the *Minneapolis Journal*, the war department was “looking to the development of Fort Snelling into one of the biggest military posts in the United States.”<sup>81</sup>

The transfer of the Department of the Lakes to Fort Snelling, however, apparently did not materialize, and optimism about the fort’s future continued to be challenged by the conflict with Mexico. “From 1911 to 1916 only a caretaker’s squad was present during the absence of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry on the Mexican border,” Major Joseph H. Grant wrote in *Quartermaster Review*. Historians Franklin Holbrook and Livia Appel confirmed that “for several years prior



*Company M, Second Minnesota Infantry, at Fort Snelling before departing for the Mexican border, July 1916.  
(Randolph Studio, photographer; Minnesota Historical Society)*

<sup>80</sup> “No Decrease in Snelling Troops,” *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, [dateline February 15, 1913], in Stevens Scrapbook; W. W. Jermane, “Snelling Will Be Increased in Size” n.p., [dateline: February 3, 1913]; Jermane, “Fort Snelling to Be Brigade Post.”

<sup>81</sup> Jermane, “Fort Snelling to Be Brigade Post”; W. W. Jermane, “Snelling Chosen as Headquarters,” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 17, 1911.

to the [First World] war,” the fort “had not been used as a regular army post, but had served chiefly as a mobilization and demobilization point for the national guard regiments of the northwestern states that were stationed on the Mexican border.”<sup>82</sup>

It is perhaps fortunate that the fort’s population was low in June 1914 when a “cyclone” damaged the cavalry barracks, stables, and guardhouses. The barracks were further affected by a fire in August of the same year. Otherwise, it appears that the buildings received only essential maintenance during this period.<sup>83</sup>

In 1916, trouble flared at the Mexican border once again. Fort Snelling sprang to life in June as three regiments of Minnesota National Guard infantry and one battalion of artillery were summoned to Fort Snelling: “Work was immediately begun at Snelling to get it ready for occupancy by such a large force. New water pipes were laid and sites selected for the encampment of different regiments.”<sup>84</sup> Within a year after the troops departed, the fort was thrust into a more sustained period of activity by America’s entry into World War I.

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<sup>82</sup> Joseph H. Grant, “Old Fort Snelling,” *Quartermaster Review* 13 (1934): 72; Franklin Holbrook and Livia Appel, *Minnesota in the War with Germany* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1928), 1:177.

<sup>83</sup> Quartermaster Records

<sup>84</sup> “The New Era, 1900-1917.”

## MORE WAR, MORE CHANGE

As Europe became entangled in war, isolationists in the United States hoped the country would remain on the sidelines. They were not to get their wish. The National Defense Act of 1916 was a compromise that pleased no one, but it did begin to prepare the country for a conflict that, in retrospect, could not have been avoided. The act “authorized an increase in the peacetime strength of the Regular Army over a period of five years to 175,000 men and a wartime strength of close to 300,000. Bolstered by federal funds and with an organization and standards of training proscribed by the federal government, the National Guard was to be increased more than fourfold to a strength of over 400,000 and obligated to respond to the call of the President. The act also established both an Officers’ and an Enlisted Reserve Corps and a Volunteer Army to be raised only in time of war. This provision expanded the Medical Reserve Corps, established in 1908, into a full-spectrum federal reserve force that would mobilize and train over 89,476 officers during World War I. To accomplish this, the act created a new Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program to establish training centers for officers at colleges and universities.” On April 7, 1917, the United States, reluctantly and still unprepared, entered the war.<sup>85</sup>

A month later, candidates began arriving at the Officers Reserve Corps training school that had been established at Fort Snelling. They displaced the First Minnesota Infantry, a National Guard unit, which had occupied some of the barracks after being called into federal service “to guard strategic points in Minnesota” in March. The officer candidates were initially organized into fifteen companies, collectively known as the Thirteenth Provisional Training Regiment, and put through an intense five-week training program.<sup>86</sup>

At this juncture, the weaker candidates were sent home and the remainder were regrouped into nine infantry companies, three batteries of field artillery, one troop of cavalry, and two special units. The later were sent away for further training—a company of coast artillerymen to Virginia, and some 150 student engineers to Fort Leavenworth. “Instruction now resolved itself into infantry and field artillery training,” historians Holbrook and Appel explained. “The cavalry troop remained nominally a unit of cavalry, and cavalry commissions were granted to the successful candidates; but because there were no horses for the men they finished the course as infantrymen.” The artillery students borrowed fieldpieces from a battalion of the National Guard’s First Minnesota Field Artillery. The infantry candidates had the commraderie of the Thirty-sixth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Regiments, “brigaded . . . in a newly constructed cantonment south of the brick barracks of the training camp.”<sup>87</sup>

The cantonment was one of thirty-two training camps that the army established across the country after Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which instituted universal conscription, in May 1917. The draft swelled the army’s ranks from 200,000 to 3.7 million by November 1918. Draftees enrolled and were trained at the cantonments. A sixteen-week

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<sup>85</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 382, 384.

<sup>86</sup> Grant, “Old Fort Snelling,” 72; Holbrook and Appel, *Minnesota in the War with Germany*, 1:177-185; Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles: A Military History of Minnesota*, 146.

<sup>87</sup> Holbrook and Appel, *Minnesota in the War with Germany*, 1:185-189.

program was tailored to educate a soldier about the role he was to play in the field, but the cantonment commanders had a good deal of latitude in the structure and content of the course.<sup>88</sup>

The Officer Reserve Corps training school continued as the Fort Snelling cantonment mushroomed. The first class of 1,551 officer candidates graduated on August 13, 1917. Twelve days later, another class began. Rather than start with a general training phase, this group was immediately segregated into eight companies of infantry, three batteries of field artillery, and one company of coast artillery; the latter soon moved to a more appropriate location. Cavalry had been eliminated because of the lack of horses, and now the artillery units were also short of necessary equipment because the First Minnesota Field Artillery had been deployed. They finally obtained a fieldpiece in October, a month before the second and final camp ended with the commissioning of 971 officers. This made a total of about 2,500 men who succeeded in becoming officers of the more than 4,000 who had enrolled in the two courses. Soon after the departure of the second group in the end of November, “two battalions of the 36<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry began taking over the brick barracks for their winter quarters.”<sup>89</sup>

Infantry training was also hampered by lack of the latest weapon, namely the rapid-fire machine gun. Although the army had begun to issue manually operated machine guns shortly after the Civil War, Congress provided little funding for acquiring the most up-to-date models until the inception of World War I. After Congress authorized \$12 million to purchase the weapons in 1916, it took the army a year to select a standard model. As a result, the army had few machine guns ready for combat when the United States entered World War I. The army had to rely on French manufacturers until domestic production geared up, but by late summer 1918, it was being supplied with high-quality American-made Browning machine guns and automatic rifles.<sup>90</sup>

In September 1918, shortly before the armistice with Germany in November, the focus at Fort Snelling shifted to care of the returning soldiers. U.S. General Hospital No. 29 was established at the fort to treat the sick and wounded. When the hospital closed in August 1919, the fort awaited its next chapter without its staunch supporter, Congressman Stevens, who had lost his seat in the House of Representatives in 1914.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 20-21.

<sup>89</sup> Holbrook and Appel, *Minnesota in the War with Germany*, 1:190-199. The First Minnesota was renamed the 151<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery and was “the only state regiment to go through the First World War very nearly intact.” (Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 140.)

<sup>90</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation*, 367-368; Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 24-25.

<sup>91</sup> *Reveille: The Call to a New Life*, vol. 11, Fort Snelling, July 3, 1919, 17; Grant, “Old Fort Snelling,” 72.

## THE ARMY BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

With the end of the war, the army again saw its forces reduced and reorganized. The first challenge after the end of hostilities was to return soldiers to civilian life. The army established thirty demobilization centers around the country in an effort to release soldiers in the general vicinity of their homes. Within nine months of the war's end, some 3.25 million soldiers had been discharged. By the close of 1919, the army was once again a volunteer organization and its size had been trimmed to 19,000 officers and 205,000 enlisted men.<sup>92</sup>

The National Defense Act of 1920 brought a major change of philosophy, “reject[ing] the theory of an expansible Regular Army that Army leaders had urged since the days of John C. Calhoun.” Instead the army would have three components. The relatively small Regular Army, with up to 17,726 officers and 280,000 enlisted men, would be augmented by citizen enrollees in the event of a crisis. The National Guard would become more structured than it had been in the past, undergoing training with the Regular Army on a routine basis. The third component, the Organized Reserves, would be subdivided into the Officers' Reserve Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps. To facilitate efficient management, the emphasis was on the division—with 10,000 to 15,000 men—instead of the 500- to 1,000-person regiment. The country was divided into nine geographical units, each with a total of six infantry divisions: one Regular Army, two National Guard, and three Organized Reserve.<sup>93</sup>

At the time of the reorganization, though, the size of the army was reduced and, as in earlier periods, efforts to streamline operations were foiled by the local advocates of any base recommended for closure. Congress decreased the maximum size of the enlisted force to 175,000 in January 1921, 150,000 in June, and 125,000 in the following year, when the number of commissioned officers was dropped to 12,000. Even though the Regular Army had nine infantry divisions on paper, its actual troop numbers were the equivalent of only three divisions. By 1932, the infantry's “twenty-four regiments available in the United States for field service were spread among forty-five posts, thirty-four of them hosting a battalion or smaller unit.” Logistics and training were greatly complicated by this dispersion, with drills rarely on a scale above a regiment. Maintaining the limited troop numbers was a higher priority than equipment, so little was spent to upgrade armaments and other materiel. Military historian James Hewes characterized the army in the period between the world wars as “little more than a peacetime constabulary force . . . scattered in nine skeletonized divisions, not one of them ready for combat. It had been emaciated by repeated budget cuts, debilitated by the Great Depression, and demoralized by widespread public disillusionment over the United States role in World War I.”<sup>94</sup>

While inefficient for Regular Army operations, the broad geographical coverage did make it easier to train the reserves. “Guardsmen,” a history notes, “engaged in forty-eight armory drills and fifteen days of field training each year.” In the years between the wars, the National Guard claimed about 180,000 members. While far below the 436,000 authorized by the National Defense Act, it was still the largest component of the army. The Enlisted Reserve

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<sup>92</sup> Steward, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 54-55.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60; Hewes, *From Root to McNamara*, 56.

Corps attracted few participants, but the Officers' Reserve Corps numbered around 100,000. As veterans retired from the corps, they were replaced by new recruits from the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), officially created by the Defense Act of 1916, and the Citizens' Military Training Camps (CMTC). The latter were an outgrowth of a four-week summer military training camp for young business and professional men that General Wood had introduced in 1915. The course proved successful and the "Plattsburg" idea, named after the camp's New York location, was repeated at other bases around the country. Each summer between 1921 and 1941, the four-week CMTC training program attracted around 30,000 young men. Those who enrolled for several years in the camps and completed home study courses could receive a commission in the Officers' Reserve Corps.<sup>95</sup>

Ironically, the army reached its biggest "enrollment" in the 1930s with a nonmilitary program, part of a federal relief effort during the Great Depression. When put in charge of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, the army assigned over 3,000 officers to quickly mobilize 1,315 camps across the country. Within seven weeks the camps held 310,000 men. Over 9,000 reserve officers were involved in the program by mid-1935, releasing the regular officers to return to standard military duty.<sup>96</sup>

Workers funded by federal relief programs, especially the Works Progress Administration (WPA), were used to upgrade posts after Congress authorized an increase in the size of the army's enlisted force to 165,000, one of General MacArthur's goals during his term as chief of staff from 1930 to 1935. As part of an effort to mechanize, motorize, and enlarge combat units, he imposed yet another reorganization on the army, resulting in four headquarters plus an additional one for the Army Air Corps—which, as a relatively new and high-profile program, received more than its proportionate share of the army's meager funds. Well aware of the threat of war in Europe, the army expanded joint training exercises with National Guard troops and the navy in 1935. About one-third of the army's entire force was dedicated to coastal defense.<sup>97</sup>

The army finally began improving its weaponry and mobilization strategy during this period. The infantry adopted the Garand semiautomatic rifle as its standard weapon in 1936, which proved far superior to the German and Russian counterparts it soon faced.<sup>98</sup>

The army also reduced its reliance on the horse: "Horsepower yielded to motor power as quickly as vehicles could be acquired, although horse cavalry retained a hold on Army thinking and tactics for years," *American Military History* observed. Only motorized transport was included in planning for a new type of infantry division, with three rather than four regiments, which decreased a division's size from about 22,000 to 15,000 men. Both the number of troops and the mode of transportation made these units more mobile and better able to maneuver during combat.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 61; Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 1, *The United States Army and Forging of a Nation*, 380.

<sup>96</sup> Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 63-64.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

## FORT SNELLING BETWEEN THE WARS

Fort Snelling during the interwar years reflected the trends of the army at large. At the close of World War I, the country's first priority was to make a quick return to normalcy. The fort's brief stint as General Hospital No. 29 served this transition. Then, despite the attempt to broaden its scope in the early decades of the twentieth century, the fort reverted to its traditional relationship with the infantry. After a long absence, the Third Infantry returned, on foot, in 1921. The Third had been stationed at a number of posts around the country after its initial tour in the Philippines. It returned to the Philippines between 1909 and 1912, then spent three years at Fort Ontario, New York, before being dispatched to the Mexican border in 1915. The Third was at Camp Sherman, Ohio, when the army was reorganized in 1920, and a number of men were discharged from the unit. The remaining 320 men began the 900-mile march from Camp Sherman to Fort Snelling in August 1921. "Headquarters Company, Service Company, Companies 'E' and 'F' and the Regimental Machine Gun Company, were the organizations making the march," the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* later reminisced. "The men carried rifles and automatic rifles and full field equipment, including one hundred rounds of ammunition in the belt and two full bandoliers—total weight of pack and equipment about seventy pounds. The shortest march any day was 10 miles, the longest 21 miles." When they reached Camp Perry, Ohio, in late September, "any man desiring discharge was given it." Fifty-five men took the offer and the rest, along with "37 horses, 110 mules and 26 wagons," continued the march, finally making it to Fort Snelling on November 17. Ten years later, fifteen men who had participated in the march were still posted at the fort.<sup>100</sup>

With the arrival of the Third at Fort Snelling, its leader, Colonel A. W. Bjornstad, became the post's commander. Born and raised in Minnesota, Bjornstad worked to recruit local men to expand the Third's depleted force to its allocated peacetime strength of 1,150 men. Within a year, he had almost reached that goal. The unit's 1890s nickname, "Minnesota's Own," was revived.<sup>101</sup>

"Like the Army itself, Fort Snelling had changed since 1899 when the Third was last stationed there," a regimental history observed. "An immense new cantonment area of wooden barracks and a hospital complex had been added during World War I. The old hay barns and stables now shared space with motor pools and gas pumps." The Third soon identified a new mission, training for cold weather warfare, with the aid of "winter equipment—skis, snowshoes, sled mounts for machine guns—[that] had been turned in at Fort Snelling by units recently returned from the Army's expedition in North Russia."<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Grant, "Old Fort Snelling," 72; Military Historical Society of Minnesota, "Third United States Infantry"; "Ten Years Ago," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, October 2, 1931; Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 162.

<sup>101</sup> W. H. Brill, "'University of Fort Snelling' Transforms Army of Past," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, February 25, 1923.

<sup>102</sup> Military Historical Society of Minnesota, "Third United States Infantry."

Bjornstad used the cold-weather training as part of an overall effort to make all members of the Third capable teachers. In the event of war, many of the enlisted men, as well as the officers, would be responsible for training masses of draftees. The “University of Fort Snelling” offered a variety of general courses for officers and enlisted men and special programs in “electrical work, drafting and topography, clerical, auto mechanics, blacksmiths and horseshoers, cobblers, saddlers, wheelwright and wagoners’ work and photography.” Four men from each company were required to take a two-month course on the “art of cooking,” followed by six months of practical application of their new skills. A post-graduate course was available for mess sergeants, “the supreme commander of the kitchen.”<sup>103</sup>

The Third practiced its training role by working with National Guard and reserve units in the 1920s and throughout the Depression. In 1933, for example, sixty-two artillery and infantry officers finished a two-week course. When they arrived at the fort in mid-May, they were “quartered in the Hostess House of the cantonment area. Near by is an Officers’ Mess where they are accommodated at the very nominal sum of \$1.00 per day.” The Third also provided staff for Fort Snelling’s Citizens Military Training Camp, which was particularly well attended during the Depression. In 1931, about 1,800 students participated. In 1934, over 300 students from Minnesota and almost 200 from Wisconsin spent August 1934 at the fort’s annual camp. “The training these young men are to receive will be thorough,” the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* reported. “The mornings will be devoted to various phases of military training while the afternoons will be given over to drills and



*Winter training at Fort Snelling: men on snowshoes pulling machine gun, 1923 (above), and members of the Third Infantry on skis, 1929 (Kenneth M. Wright, photographer). (Minnesota Historical Society)*

<sup>103</sup> Brill, “University of Fort Snelling.”



athletics.” The 1935 camp was held in July and drew some 1,332 students, of which 1,032 were infantry and the remainder artillery.<sup>104</sup>

Public relations motivated some of the events staged at the fort by the Third, along with the Fourteenth Field Artillery and the Seventh Tank Company, which were also stationed at the fort. As a regimental history of the Third recalled: “Companies of the Third marched in nearly every local parade. Weekends brought ceremonial parades on post, along with public band concerts, athletic contests, and horse shows. A legendary trick horse named ‘Whiskey’ delighted audiences for nearly 20 years by jumping through rings of fire, leaping obstacles, and bowing to the crowd. At least once a year, the Third put on a spectacular military show featuring such crowd pleasers as tank circuses, dirigible landings, mortar and machine gun drills, and recreated World War I battles.”<sup>105</sup>

The fort hosted a street carnival in June 1923 including a “sham battle . . . between the ‘Blue’ and ‘Red’ forces, in which trench mortars, howitzers, tanks and other implements of modern warfare will be used to demonstrate an infantry attack, assisted by the heavier equipment,” a newspaper announced. “Companies I, K, L, and M of the Third Infantry, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Tank Platoon and the Howitzer Platoon for the regiment will represent the ‘Blue’ army, and the ‘Red’ army will be composed of forces from other companies of the regiment.” A boxing match, street dance, and sideshow rounded out the entertainment.<sup>106</sup>

It was partly because of such festivities that the fort became known as the “Country Club of the Army” in the 1920s. This image was reinforced by the fort’s golf course, swimming pool, tennis courts, and hunt club, as well as the polo matches that were popular with military and civilian spectators alike. The Third Infantry introduced the game to the fort for officers. Lest the military benefits of polo go unappreciated, the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* ran an article in its September 16, 1932 issue entitled “Why Polo?”:

Due to the rapid strides made in the motor industry early in the twentieth century, we heard and read, when the World War broke out, that it was to be a horseless war and that there would be no further need for the horse in the army. . . . But when the heavens opened up and drenched the land with torrents and roads were blocked by mud and rended by shell bursts, great numbers of abandoned motor trucks were to be seen along the roads. . . . Man and horse, those two animated machines, . . . still supply the only reliable means to draw or carry loads over . . . roads, ploughed fields, thorough streams and forests, up mountains. Realization of this has resulted in a movement by our army to preserve the horse and arrange for schools in which proper instruction in methods of caring for him could be disseminated.

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<sup>104</sup>“Reserve Officer Training at Fort Snelling,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, May 19, 1933; “Third to Train Large Group This Year,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, May 22, 1931; “1934 C. M. T. Camp,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, July 27, 1934; “1935 C. M. T. Camp,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, June 28, 1935.

<sup>105</sup> Military Historical Society of Minnesota, “Third United States Infantry.” Whiskey, who had served in the Philippines, belonged to Battery F of the Fourteenth Field Artillery. (Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 163.)

<sup>106</sup> “Guns to Roar in Sham Battle at Snelling Today,” n.p., June 2, 1923, newspaper clipping in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

The writer rationalized that “in order to be properly instructed one must be interested in that which is being taught, consequently we have our hunting and our polo, the latter probably doing more for the preservation of the horse and the schooling of the army man than the former.”<sup>107</sup>

This article came more than a year after the army’s chief of staff officially announced in May 1931 that the cavalry would be completely mechanized, supposedly eliminating horses from service. In the same month, the fort got news of an authorization of \$3,200 “for conversion of National Guard Stables into a motor shed.” This probably does not refer to Building 30, which was remodeled for use of the motor corps in 1935, according to the quartermaster records. In any event, despite the chief of staff’s announcement, the cavalry retained a substantial number of horses at some posts; Fort Des Moines, for example, had more than five hundred horses until the departure of the Fourteenth Cavalry in 1940.<sup>108</sup>

The artillery continued to use horses, as well, but the numbers were also decreasing. In December 1936, the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* noted that the post had “one of the remaining horse batteries of the Army, the remainder having fallen before the rush of motorization.” Immediately after being established in 1921 as the Seventh Training Battery at Camp Grant, Illinois, the unit undertook a strenuous cross-country march of almost four hundred miles to Fort Snelling. From July 1922 to August 1927 it was designated as Battery C of the Ninth Field Artillery, after which it became Battery F of the Eighteenth Field Artillery.<sup>109</sup>

Battery F was disbanded in September 1929 and its men, horses, and equipment were marched to Fort Des Moines. “The loss of the Battery will be most keenly felt by members of the Third Infantry,” the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* reported. Some of those in Battery F were so unhappy about leaving the fort that they “have decided to cast their lots with the doughboys and have transferred to units of the regiment.” By the following September, Battery F had been reinstated and was back at Fort Snelling. When it departed for training in May 1931, the battery had four officers, 121 enlisted men, and 119 “animals”—presumably a combination of horses and mules. Four years later, the number of enlisted men had risen to 138 and the unit was known as Battery F of the Fourteenth Field Artillery. The end of Fort Snelling’s equestrian tradition came suddenly and tragically in April 1939 when one of the artillery stables burned, killing 128 horses.<sup>110</sup>

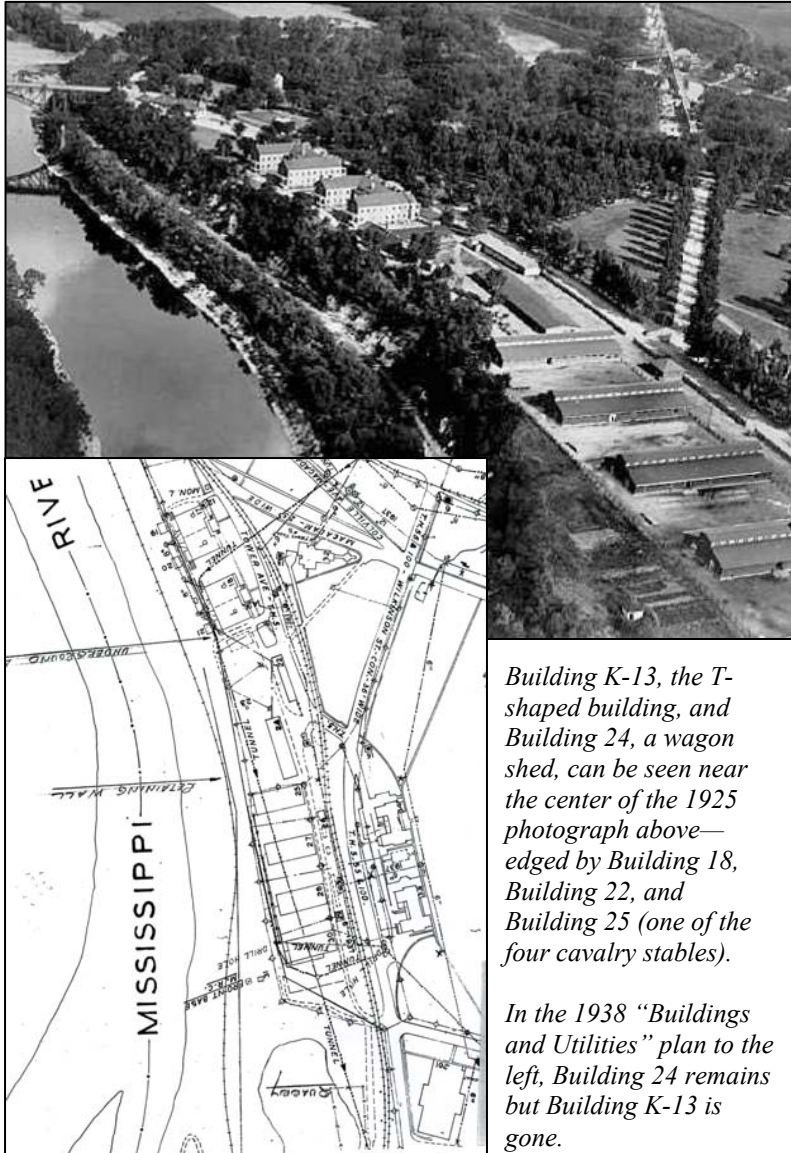
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<sup>107</sup> “Why Polo?” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 16, 1932.

<sup>108</sup> “To Abolish Cavalry” and “Riding Hall to Get Heating Plant,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, May 22, 1931; “Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,” 26.

<sup>109</sup> “Battery ‘F’ to Hold Farewell Party,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, August 23, 1929; “A Fine Outfit Moves On,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, August 30, 1929; “The Old Guard Is Home Again,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 5, 1930.

<sup>110</sup> “Battery ‘F’ to Hold Farewell Party”; “A Fine Outfit Moves On”; “The Old Guard Is Home Again”; “Battery ‘F’ to Leave for Sparta Monday; Expect to Arrive at Destination June 6,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, May 22, 1931; “Local Artillery Group Designated as Part of 14<sup>th</sup> F. a. Year Ago; Unit History Given,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 13, 1935; Steven E. Osman, “Fort Snelling in World War II: A Brief Walking and Driving Tour of the Fort Snelling Complex,” July 1992, 2, prepared for the Minnesota Historical Society.



*Building K-13, the T-shaped building, and Building 24, a wagon shed, can be seen near the center of the 1925 photograph above— edged by Building 18, Building 22, and Building 25 (one of the four cavalry stables).*

*In the 1938 “Buildings and Utilities” plan to the left, Building 24 remains but Building K-13 is gone.*

As units came and went during the interwar years, the fort experienced two major waves of construction. The first was associated with the aftermath of World War I and the conversion of the fort’s cavalry facilities for a machine-gun unit of the Third Infantry. In 1919, a single-story, 7,000-square-foot, T-shaped building (K-13) was placed west of Building 18, with a small link (K-12) constructed to attach the two buildings at a later date. Why Building K-13 was moved to this site two years before the Third returned to Fort Snelling is unclear. Formerly a hospital kitchen, the building was repurposed to serve as a machine gun repair shop and storehouse with the arrival of the Third. It was demolished in 1932.<sup>111</sup>

The T-shaped building was joined in 1922 by Building 24, a wagon shed, just to the west. Measuring 50 feet by

238 feet, it had wood walls, a concrete foundation, a wood and paper roof, and a gravel floor. Quartermaster records provide conflicting information about its capacity, which is given as both seventeen and fifty wagons. Photographs included with the records might depict the building in two different periods, or one of the photographs might not actually be of this building. The building did, in any event, remain in this location until 1942.<sup>112</sup>

The designs of Buildings K-13 and 24 were apparently based on the “600 series” standard plans for modular, wood-frame buildings. These plans, first developed in 1914, were revised in 1917 when the army needed to quickly build thirty-two cantonments for processing World War I recruits.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Quartermaster Records.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Goodwin, “National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations,” 1:199.

On the other end of the spectrum was Fort Snelling's stone chapel. Religious facilities had not kept up with the fort's expansion. The chapel that served the post through World War I had been built in the 1860s and could seat only seventy-five people. Structural engineer Walter H. Wheeler served as chair of the building committee organized in 1923. The construction was completed by soldiers at the fort, using stone salvaged from the piers and abutments of the 1880 bridge across the Mississippi. (The metal superstructure had been removed after the new bridge went into service in 1909.) Memorial windows were donated by a variety of religious and service groups. Without a regular construction crew, progress was slow, but in June 1928 the chapel was formally dedicated.<sup>114</sup>

During the same period, Wheeler designed and oversaw the erection of the nearby Mendota Bridge, the longest continuous-arch concrete bridge in the world when it opened in 1926. The bridge crossed the Minnesota River, connecting the bluff on the fort's east side to Mendota and points beyond. It replaced a ferry that had plied the River below for a century. By making the crossing much easier and faster, the bridge increased the flow of unrelated traffic through the fort.<sup>115</sup>

In the meantime, Buildings 17, 18, 22, and 30 received periodic maintenance. The quartermaster's records chronicle alterations to the buildings, sometimes in minute detail and sometimes very generally. A storm in June 1922, for example, required a \$2,200 repair to Building 17's porch.<sup>116</sup>

The fort's second and more substantial interwar construction campaign came in the 1930s as a result of the work-relief programs of the Great Depression. Projects ranged from installing porches on the officers' quarters to raising the grade of the parade grounds by several feet, one wheelbarrow of earth at a time. Paint was a major improvement of 1932: "A thorough two coat paint job was done on the exterior of all barracks, Headquarters building, the Signal Office building, the Hospital, the Band Quarters, Guard house, all of 'A' row, 'B' row and part of 'D' row. This decoration has added new life to the general aspect of the post, attractive white has replaced the sombre green with its red trimming."<sup>117</sup>

The army, with the aid of the WPA, inaugurated a \$1.1 million improvement campaign at the fort in the fall of 1936. "The main purpose of the program is to provide work for men on relief in the Twin Cities for the coming winter," the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* explained, "due to the fact that many of the jobs heretofore active in these cities have been completed." The WPA supplied \$691,000; the army funded the remainder. By December, the initiative included more than sixty projects at the post. One involved grading and seeding "our 21 acre parade ground," the *Bulletin* reported. "It required the moving of 17,000 yards of dirt to

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<sup>114</sup> "Old Snelling Bridge Stone Will Be Used for Chapel at Fort," n.p., May 2, 1923; "Dedicate New Fort Snelling Chapel Today," n.p., June 10, 1928, newspaper clippings in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

<sup>115</sup> "Walter Wheeler, Designer of Mendota Bridge, Dies," obituary, *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 21, 1974; Nicholas Westbrook, ed., *A Guide to the Industrial Archeology of the Twin Cities* (Saint Paul: Society for Industrial Archeology, 1983), 29.

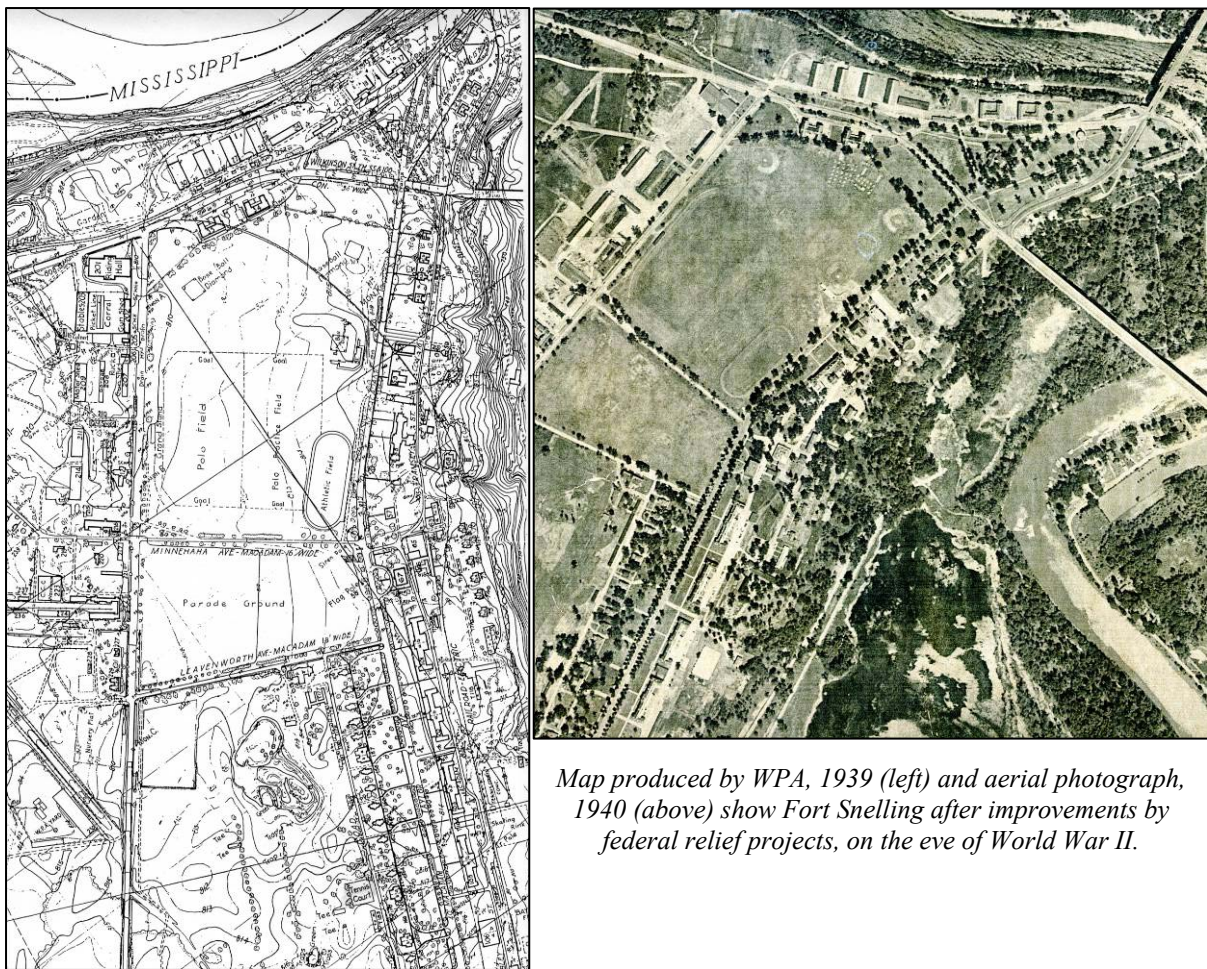
<sup>116</sup> Quartermaster Records.

<sup>117</sup> "Snelling Becomes Spick and Span under General Reconditioning," n.p., n.d., newspaper clipping in Box 1, Fuller Collection; "A Happy New Year to All," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 31, 1932.



smooth out the rough spots.” One source said that before the work started, “the old drill field was in such bad condition that it was impossible to maintain a straight line of men standing in formation.” A few years later, a massive concrete stadium rose on the parade ground, another product of the WPA.<sup>118</sup>

Although cold weather stopped most outside work towards the end of 1936, “repair on side and front porches was started November 30<sup>th</sup>. Other repairs were made on barracks and quarters where necessary, including weather stripping, removal of dead pipes, installing new water lines and repairing roofs.” A week earlier, the *Bulletin* explained that “sidewalks, culverts and general cement work has been completed; . . . all broken slate on roofs is being taken care of; store windows will be refitted and adjusted where necessary.” The article concluded: “In general, Fort Snelling is getting a good house-cleaning and also many new additions and improvements.”<sup>119</sup>



Map produced by WPA, 1939 (left) and aerial photograph, 1940 (above) show Fort Snelling after improvements by federal relief projects, on the eve of World War II.

<sup>118</sup> “WPA-Army Launch Million-dollar Job,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, October 9, 1936; “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 12, 1936; “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 5, 1936.

<sup>119</sup> “WPA-Army Launch Million-dollar Job”; “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 12, 1936; “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 5, 1936.

At the same time, “Taylor Avenue is being widened south of ‘B’ Row and grading and surfacing of the roads around the Country Club Area are 60% complete.” Aggregate and riprap for road and other projects was supplied by the post’s reopened stone quarry upstream from the cavalry stables. The quarry also provided building stone for an addition to the officer’s club. Along the river bluffs, crews were sent to stabilize eroded soil that was loosening foundations of fort buildings.<sup>120</sup>

WPA labor was used to convert Building 30 from a stable into a thirty-three vehicle garage and shop in 1935-1936 at a cost of about \$8,400. In late 1936, the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* noted that “the Service Company Wagon Shed [Building 24] has been almost completely remodeled and will be completed in the near future. The Machine Gun Cart Sheds [Buildings 19, 20, and 21] are being outfitted with stoves and new electric lights.” The machine gun cart sheds, located behind Buildings 17 and 18, measured 24 feet by 40 feet. Designated Buildings 19, 20, and 21 in the new system, their original numbers—F-8, G-8, and G-9—suggest they were moved here from another location. The wood-frame structures, which had wood-sided walls, concrete floors, and stone foundations, were disassembled in 1942, as was Building 24. The short-lived sheds provide two examples of recycled building numbers. Quartermaster shops constructed in 1879-1880 and destroyed by fire in 1908 had originally been designated with the first number that appeared on one of the machine gun cart sheds, F-8. After Building 20 was demolished, a transformer vault became Building 20.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to being of center of WPA activity, the fort was the induction point for regional enrollees in the Civilian Conservation Corps. The “temporary” World War I encampment was pressed into service to organize crews of young men, led by reserve officers. The crews were sent to do conservation and improvement projects in state and national parks and forests, primarily in northern Minnesota.<sup>122</sup>

Within a few years, over \$2.5 million had been spent on WPA improvements at the fort. By the late 1930s, this work was focusing less on beautification and more on preparation for war. The federal Protective Mobilization Plan finalized in 1937 was an acknowledgement of war on the horizon. It outlined a process for mobilization, calling for initial activation of the National Guard while the army expanded to the appropriate troop level. “The Army’s manpower planning included, for the first time prior to actual war, a definite training plan that specified the location, size, and schedules of replacement training centers, unit training centers, and schools.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 19, 1936; “WPA Projects, *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 12, 1936; “Snelling Becomes Spick and Span under General Reconditioning”; “Brigadier General David L. Stone Surveys the Damage Done by Soil Erosion at Fort Snelling” (MH5.9 F1.3 p21) and “Soil Erosion Loosens Foundation at Fort Snelling” (MH5.9 F1.3 p22), both photographs from 1935 at the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul.

<sup>121</sup> Quartermaster Records; “Numbering and Designation of Buildings as Requested in Paragraph 3, Fourth Indorsement, 600.911,” November 17, 1941, typescript, in files at Fort Snelling Visitor Center; “WPA Projects,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 19, 1936.

<sup>122</sup> Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 167.

<sup>123</sup> “Snelling Becomes Spick and Span under General Reconditioning”; Stewart, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003*, 68.

Future war needs were probably behind the war department's approval in 1938 of the expenditure of \$100,000. This covered the erection of two new buildings with WPA labor: barracks for the Medical Detachment, located just north of the post hospital, and a telephone exchange and barracks for the Signal Detachment east of the headquarters building.<sup>124</sup>

In concert with the mobilization plan, the authorized troop size at Fort Snelling was increased to 2,133. In the twelve-month period beginning January 1937, the post grew from 1,683 to 2,112 men. "According to some of the top kicks," the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* reported, "the big problem now is finding room for their men to sleep." This led to the addition of two 25-foot by 38-foot wings to each of the two artillery barracks in 1938 using WPA labor.<sup>125</sup>

Even before this, the size of an infantry company was enlarged, necessitating a corresponding expansion of barracks, including Buildings 17 and 18. Building 17 received a "one story and ground floor basement addition . . . to provide for an additional 24 enlisted men in each troop," according to a notation in the building inventory dated May 21, 1936. Another note adds: "Work incomplete: Floor to be put in new addition basement. Ceiling to be placed in basement of new addition." The cost for the entire addition was \$4,988, some of which was provided by WPA funds and the remainder from the fort's annual appropriation and "soldier labor." A similar addition was constructed on Building 18.<sup>126</sup>

This could be some of the work mentioned in an article in the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* in July 1935: "Companies 'E', 'F', and 'G' have started to enlarge their barracks to house their additional quota of enlisted men. Company 'F' has already begun excavation in rear of their barracks for an addition to present barracks. 'E' and 'G' Companies are wrecking several buildings in the cantonment area, the materials of which is to be used in enlarging their present quarters." As of January 1938, the actual strength of Companies E, F, and G was just a few men short of their authorized strength of 115.<sup>127</sup>

Improvements were also made to other buildings on the Lower Post in the 1930s. Building 22, for example, received minor alterations—two window shades, one "heavy screen," and "general repairs." Another source mentions that work was being done on some "barracks barns" at an unspecified location. The "barns were run down and badly in need of repair when the project went into operation. They have been painted, the stalls completely rebuilt and, with the runways, repaved." While the cavalry had lost its horses, animals apparently continued to serve as motive power for machine-gun units as well as the artillery. A column headed "'M' Mutterings" in the September 8, 1933 issue of the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* noted that "our stables are in quarantine. A break for the stable crew but not so hot for the ladies and officers accustomed to using machine gun animals and private mounts."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> "Post to Get New Barracks," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, July 2, 1938.

<sup>125</sup> "Fort Snelling Nears Authorized Strength," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, January 15, 1938; Quartermaster Records.

<sup>126</sup> Quartermaster Records.

<sup>127</sup> "Cos. of 3<sup>rd</sup> Inf. to Enlarge Barracks," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, July 12, 1935; "Fort Snelling Nears Authorized Strength."

<sup>128</sup> "Snelling Becomes Spick and Span under General Reconditioning"; "'M' Mutterings," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 8, 1933.

## RETURN TO ARMS: WORLD WAR II

When Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 propelled Great Britain and France into war against Germany, President Roosevelt declared a limited national emergency and increased the size of the army and National Guard to almost one-quarter of a million troops each. The outlook grew even worse in the following year when France and other European countries were occupied by German forces. "Congressional appropriations between May and October 1940 reflect the threat," *American Military History* explained. "The Army received more than \$8 billion for its needs during the following year, a greater sum than it had received to support its activities over the preceding twenty years." In June 1940, the army was planning to amass a force of 1.2 million by October 1941; by September 1940, the War Department urged an expansion to 1.5 million as soon as possible. In August 1940, the National Guard was pressed into federal service and the Organized Reserves were activated. The following month, Congress passed legislation establishing a draft to induct civilians into the military.<sup>129</sup>

By the time Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the army was organized into four "armies" with a total of 1.64 million soldiers, including 120,000 officers. The basic fighting unit was the division. A wartime infantry division contained 14,253 (about one thousand fewer soldiers than before the war started) organized into three infantry regiments, four artillery battalions, a reconnaissance troop, and other supporting units: engineer, ordnance, signal, quartermaster, medical, and military police. In December 1941, the army had thirty infantry divisions, as well as two cavalry divisions and five armored divisions. The armored divisions were the result of a forced marriage, opposed by both the cavalry and the infantry, of the cavalry's mechanized brigade and the infantry's tank units in 1940. Although nearly half of the army's divisions were theoretically ready for combat by the end of 1940, nearly all were still in the continental United States because of a lack of training, understaffed supporting units, and a shortage of weapons and other equipment. The country's industries were hurrying to supply armaments, but most of their production had been sent to help countries already engaged in war with Germany, Italy, and Japan.<sup>130</sup>

A year later, the army claimed about 5.4 million officers and men in seventy-three divisions. In November 1942, President Roosevelt capped the army's size for the following year at 8.2 million. He was concerned about the limited population that remained available for recruitment and the shortage of workers at the U.S. factories supporting the war effort. "The pool of unemployed that had cushioned the shock of mobilization for three years had been almost drained," *American Military History* noted. "Labor had become tight in many areas."<sup>131</sup>

Despite mushrooming growth in the army's ranks, its training efforts continued to be hampered by a lack of officers and equipment into early 1943. During that year, though, over 1.5 million men in thirteen divisions were sent overseas, marking a turning point when "the full impact of American mobilization and production was felt." By August 1943, the army

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<sup>129</sup> Steward, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 69-71.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72, 93, 119.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118.



numbered 8.3 million, slightly exceeding the president's quota, with eighty-nine divisions: sixty-eight infantry, sixteen armoured, and five airborne. That number would remain constant until the end of hostilities, although the percentage of army personnel engaged in ground combat dropped from one-half to one-third between 1942 and 1945. This was, in part, because of a burgeoning behind-the-scenes bureaucracy: "For every three fighting men in the ground army there were two technicians or administrators somewhere behind, engaged in functions other than killing the enemy."<sup>132</sup>

It was the labor shortage and the deployment of most combat divisions overseas that finally gave the army the opportunity to streamline its facilities in the United States. "In 1944 the manpower shortage became nationwide. The Army, under the double pressures of accelerated deployment schedules and heavy demands for infantry replacements for battle casualties in the two-front full-scale war, was driven to stringent measures. . . . As the Army moved overseas, many posts were consolidated or closed, releasing large numbers of overhead personnel."<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 105, 118-123.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 120.

## FORT SNELLING'S LAST BATTLE

A reception center was established at Fort Snelling in 1940, one of a series of similar facilities that the army planned across the country. The fort's reception center was to be the induction point for army recruits from Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and northern Iowa. It was situated south of the existing fort campus, the same area that its World War I predecessor had occupied. The previous facility, which had held about one hundred wood-frame buildings, had been demolished in the late 1930s because the "temporary" structures had deteriorated after two decades of use. When the buildings were removed, another "temporary" camp was erected nearby at a cost of about \$350,000 to house civilians in CMTC and ROTC training programs. (The National Defense Act of 1920 prohibited civilians from using permanent military structures.) The reception center was located between the civilian camp and the main fort campus.<sup>134</sup>

The army awarded a contract for the reception center's construction on August 23, 1940. It was scheduled to open in November with a total of seventeen wood-frame buildings including ten two-story barracks, three mess halls, and recreation facilities. It was designed to serve five hundred men, who would spend two or three weeks there. During that time, they would receive clothing, equipment, and a little training. As the initial construction was nearing completion, the army launched a second phase, more than doubling the center's capacity to 1,260 men. In early 1941, a newspaper described the complex as having "32 buildings, 20 barracks, six mess halls, administration building, post exchange, recreation, infirmary, warehouse and assembly." By September 1941, there were thirty-eight buildings. Before Pearl Harbor, the center processed 30,000 men and the staff "felt that they were prepared for almost any kind of load in case of war."<sup>135</sup>

They could not have anticipated, though, the phenomenal upsurge in activity that was stimulated by America's entry into the conflict. The army periodically increased the center's size. During 1942, dozens of new buildings were hastily erected as some 150,000 recruits were examined; about two-thirds were accepted into the army. By January 1943, the center filled over three hundred buildings and had beds for around 4,500 men. Soldiers spent three to five days at the fort where they were issued uniforms and underwent medical examinations before being shipped elsewhere for training. The fort was also a gathering point for the National Guard, which was called into federal service in February 1941.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> "Northwest Conscripts May Be Housed in Quarters," n.p., August 24, 1940, "Recruit Barracks Contract Awarded," n.p., August 24, 1940, "Four States Will Send Draftees to Fort Snelling," n.p., November 15, 1940, "Draftee's Homes Rise on Site of 1917 Camp," n.p., n.d., "Completion of Barracks Is Being Rushed," n.p., n.d., "New Snelling Recruit Unit Nearly Ready," n.p., January 15, 1941, and "New Buildings at Fort Ready Ahead of Time," n.p., January 21, 1941, newspaper clippings in Box 2, Fuller Collection; and "Projects Keep 250 Men Busy," n.p., n.d., newspaper clipping in Box 1, Fuller Collection.

<sup>135</sup> "Fort Snelling Will Get 17 New Buildings," n.p., August 12, 1940, "Northwest Conscripts May Be Housed in Quarters," "Snelling Barracks Nearly Ready for Draftees and Volunteers," [Minneapolis?] *Times-Tribune*, [September?] 1940, newspaper clippings in Box 2, Fuller Collection; "New Snelling Recruit Unit Nearly Ready"; Floyd E. Eller, "A Soldier Looks at History," *Minnesota History* 24 (March 1943): 6.

<sup>136</sup> Eller, "A Soldier Looks at History," 7-8; "Fifteen New Snelling Buildings Are Nearly Completed," n.p., n.d., newspaper clipping in Box 2, Fuller Collection; Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles*, 169.

As the fort filled up with new recruits, the Third Infantry began its departure. It had been included as part of the Sixth Infantry Division, which was organized in 1940 with its headquarters at Fort Snelling. The Third Infantry's Third Battalion was the first American unit sent out of the country in anticipation of the U.S. entry into the war. The unit was picked because of its cold weather training to go to Saint John's, Newfoundland, an important post on the convoy route to England and Russia. Other units of the Third went to Greenland and to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. By the end of 1942, the Third was completely gone from Fort Snelling, never to return.<sup>137</sup>

With most troops sent abroad or to other posts and with the pace of recruitment slowing by mid-1944, the fort went from being overtaxed to underutilized. This situation did not last for long, though, as it was soon to host one of the army's most unique wartime programs, the Military Intelligence Service Language School.

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<sup>137</sup> Eller, "A Soldier Looks at History," 5; Military Historical Society of Minnesota, "Third United States Infantry." After a brief period when it was decommissioned following the war, the Third was reactivated at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia, where it became the "lead unit for all Army ceremonial and escort activities in and around the nation's capital. . . . The regiment became the official honor guard of the President in 1952."

## GAINED IN TRANSLATION: THE NISEI CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT

The army had been involved with a Japanese language training program in Tokyo, organized by the U.S. embassy, since before World War I. By the 1930s, the army was hiring small numbers of second-generation Japanese Americans, known as “Nisei,” to serve as interpreters and even informants. As political tensions between the United States and Japan increased, the military became concerned about the loyalty of Nisei. Even more suspect were the “Kibei,” Nisei who returned to Japan, often for schooling, and then came back to America. Nonetheless, army officers recognized the need to have in-house staff proficient in the complex Japanese language. The Nisei and Kibei were to prove trustworthy and invaluable in addressing this need.<sup>138</sup>

Army intelligence operations, including linguistics training, were the responsibility of the Military Intelligence Division. The division, though, “had dwindled in size during the interwar years,” according to historian James C. McNaughton. “Combat units lacked intelligence personnel and the specialized schools to train them, and few officers valued intelligence as a career.” As a result, some training responsibilities were delegated to the Fourth Army, designated the Western Defense Command in March 1941.<sup>139</sup>

In April 1941, the Fourth Army decided to recruit linguists from the 1,000 men of Japanese descent in its force of over 100,000 soldiers. On July 1, the War Department authorized the establishment of a Japanese language school to train intelligence personnel. Even before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, sixty students, virtually all Nisei, were enrolled in the Fourth Army Intelligence School, which was housed in a converted airplane hangar at Crissy Field, part of the Presidio in San Francisco. The first class graduated on May 1, 1942. Some of the graduates were selected to stay at the school to teach, while the rest went to serve in the field.<sup>140</sup>

The backlash from Pearl Harbor led President Franklin Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 9066 in February 1942, resulting in the forced removal from the West Coast of anyone of Japanese ancestry. Given this order and the hostile climate in San Francisco, the school needed to relocate. At the encouragement of Minnesota governor Harold Stassen, the school moved to Camp Savage, southwest of the Twin Cities. This former Civilian Conservation Corps camp was being used as a shelter for homeless men and was in poor condition. It did not take long, though, to convert the camp to its new use.<sup>141</sup>

By the time the school arrived in Minnesota, the Military Intelligence Division had expanded its operations and opened a Military Intelligence Training Center in Camp Ritchie, Maryland. The division had also gained stature, reporting directly to the general staff rather than the

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<sup>138</sup> James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 14-15, 18-19.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 15, 21.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-19, 21, 23, 28, 56.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 45, 54.

Western Defense Command. This prompted a change in the language school's name to the Military Intelligence Service Language School.<sup>142</sup>

The Camp Savage school got down to business quickly. On the first of June, 18 Nisei teachers began training the first class of 160 Nisei and 30 Caucasian students at Camp Savage. Most graduated on December 1. A new class started almost immediately with 442 Nisei and 22 Caucasians, with the majority finishing in June 1943. Enrollment in July stood at 733 Nisei and 22 Caucasians.<sup>143</sup>

The school's technical director, John Fujio Aiso, changed the program's structure in response to its growth. In June 1943, he created three class levels related to ability, and also formed non-teaching sections. One, the Translation Section, "became a graduate pool for Nisei waiting for assignment," McNaughton explained. The "students translated a variety of technical materials. While waiting for their orders (for weeks or sometimes months), the recent graduates labored over translating captured documents, partly for their intelligence value and partly to stay in practice." These documents were collected by the Military Research and Liaison Section. These non-teaching sections were retained when Aiso changed the structure again in early 1944, making four separate divisions.<sup>144</sup>

Reflecting an ongoing insecurity about the allegiance of Japanese Americans, the army required that Caucasian officers lead Nisei units. It was not until 1944 that Nisei were allowed to enroll in the MISLS's officers' candidate school. The army had few Caucasians with Japanese language skills, however, so in January 1943 it inaugurated a one-year training program at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Only after officers had completed that program were they minimally prepared to meet the rigorous course at Camp Savage.<sup>145</sup>

The camp, in the meantime, was filled to overflowing, despite the construction of a number of new buildings. The typical training course was extended from six to nine months in February 1944. By that summer, more than 1,200 Nisei and 200 other soldiers had graduated from the school, which had some 90 instructors. Fortunately, the Seventh Service Command announced plans to close the Fort Snelling reception center in mid-1944, opening up space in the large, well-established facility not far from Camp Savage. Fort Snelling staff already provided administrative support for the school. The move began after a class graduated at Camp Savage on August 10. Classes started at Fort Snelling on August 21 with an enrollment of over 800. McNaughton described the impact of the relocation to Fort Snelling: "Now housed in permanent facilities, the school had lost the harried improvising that had marked the converted aircraft hangar at Crissy Field and the former Civilian Conservation Camp at Camp Savage."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., v.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 97, 104.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 119-120.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 147; "MISLS Graduates 92 Officers and Men in Special Ceremonies at Field House," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 15, 1945.

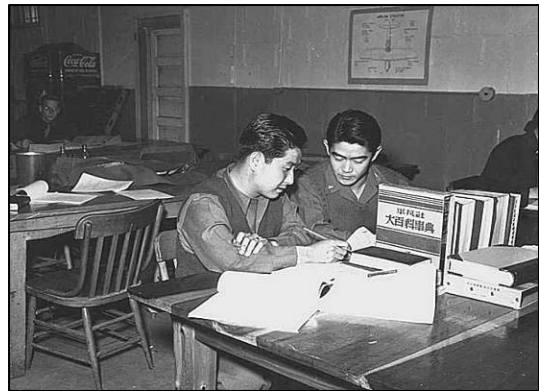
<sup>146</sup> McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists*, 299-300, 311-313.

The August class had 229 Nisei enlisted men and 124 Caucasian officer candidates. The next month, another class of 278 Nisei began, with another 659 in December. Coursework became more varied, with most programs lasting from six to nine months and some shorter courses to address specific needs. In the first twelve months at Fort Snelling, there were six new regular classes, plus six more for officers and other special groups. One of the latter comprised Nisei women. Some had wanted to enroll in the MISLS program for years, but were not accepted until mid-1944. Initially required to do clerical work, their first class started in May 1945. While the women proved to be excellent students, “by the middle of 1945 school officials had concluded that all requirements for linguists could be filled by men.”<sup>147</sup>

All told, about 2,400 Nisei began courses at Fort Snelling during its first full year as a campus and 2,078 had graduated, along with hundreds of Caucasian officer candidates. The program reached its peak about the time Japan surrendered in September 1945. During this period, the focus shifted from the written language and other skills needed in combat situations to the challenges of communication during a period of occupation. As a result, oral language ability was emphasized. Over 1,800 students in 103 sections began classes in October 1945, bringing the school’s total enrollment to 3,000. The teaching staff climbed to 162 Nisei, who lived in quarters along the Minnesota River bluff.<sup>148</sup>

When a student arrived, a history of the school explained, he was “assigned to one of the student companies which make up the ‘School Regiment’ of ten companies. He is attached to a company merely for housing, messing, administration, and minimum basic military training. All language training is done under the jurisdiction of the Academic and Military Training Sections.”<sup>149</sup>

The standard training program included “reading, writing, and speaking Japanese; translation, interpretation, and interrogation; captured document analysis; *heigo* (Japanese military and technical terms); Japanese geography and map reading; radio monitoring; social, political, economic, and cultural background of Japan; *sosho* (cursive writing); and order of Battle of the Japanese army.” In addition, the school began courses in Mandarin Chinese and Korean after moving to Fort Snelling.<sup>150</sup>



*Japanese translators at Fort Snelling, 1945.  
(Saint Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press  
photograph; Minnesota Historical Society)*

The program of instruction was intense. Although the schedule varied over time, classes ran from

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 144, 313-314, 316-318.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 313, 329; Irwin L. Slesnick and Carole E. Slesnick, *Kanji and Codes: Learning Japanese for World War II* (Bellingham, Wash.: published by the authors, 2006), 230, 233; “3,000 Students Here,” *Yuban Gogai*, November 1945.

<sup>149</sup> War Department press release, October 22, 1945, reprinted in Stone S. Ishimaru, *Military Intelligence Service Language School, U.S. Army, Fort Snelling* (Los Angeles, Calif.: TecCom Production, 1991), n.p.

<sup>150</sup> *MISLS Album, 1946* (1946; reprint, Nashville: Battery Press, 1990), 11; Tad Ichinokauchi, *John Aiso and the MIS* (California: MIS Club of Southern California, 1988), 23.

7:30 or 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. most weekdays, with hourly breaks and time for lunch. Later, as America appeared likely to be the victor in the war, the schedule allowed time for recreation at 3:30. One afternoon a week, the students had standard military training, often long marches. Students had supervised study from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. and an optional study hour after that, and many continued to study with the aid of flashlights even after barrack lights were turned off at 10:00 p.m. Examinations were on Saturday mornings.<sup>151</sup>

The school provided opportunities to help students make the most of their limited time off. The Office of Special Service had “trained personnel, athletic equipment and many invaluable contacts which miraculously provided the open sesame to choice recreational and cultural events around town.” Red Cross organizations, the YMCA and YWCA, churches, and other groups offered opportunities for students to have time away from the fort. “The authorities and people of the Twin Cities greeted and treated them as American citizens,” a War Department press release remarked in 1945. Local citizens “furnished entertainment that made their load lighter and their life more comfortable.” In return, the students pitched in during emergencies: “When Mayor McDonough of Saint Paul appealed for help to Colonel Harry J. Keeley, post commander of Fort Snelling, for aid to the hard-pressed Twin Cities Coal and Coke Companies which were unable to make adequate deliveries to Twin Cities homes because of a cold wave and lack of manpower, many of the Japanese-Americans went to work driving trucks and delivering coal in sub-zero weather. Many of these volunteers had only shortly arrived from the balmy climate of the Hawaiian Islands.”<sup>152</sup>

The heart of the school was near the post theater in “a pair of buildings of later architecture, used for classrooms and administrative offices,” a participant recalled. Building 57 (originally the Band Barracks) was labeled the “brain cell for all military orders” in a 1946 school history. The “commandant’s office was housed here as well as [the] office of the Assistant Commandant, Personnel Procurement, Director of Intelligence, Adjutant and Administrative Sections.” The school’s commandant, Colonel Kai Rasmussen, was one of the program’s founders. Born in Denmark, he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and had served the army in number of locations, including Japan from 1936 to 1940. The commanding officer and executive officer for the school battalion were in Building 34. Building 107 served as quarters for “enlisted faculty, administrative and cadre personnel, who comprised School’s Headquarters Company.”<sup>153</sup>

The classrooms were apparently concentrated along Taylor Avenue, particularly in the former infantry barracks. A caption for an aerial photograph of the fort in the 1946 history explained that “the line of geometric brick buildings along Taylor Avenue (along long rows of Elms) were used for classrooms.” Another photograph showed one of the infantry barracks, noting that “brick school buildings were bulwarks against Minnesota’s climatic ferocity.” These buildings also held the school’s director of military training (Building 103-A), director of academic training (Building 103-B), and library (Building 102-A). Fort

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<sup>151</sup> Slesnick and Slesnick, *Kanji and Codes*, 231; *MISLS Album*, 1946, 64; War Department press release, October 22, 1945.

<sup>152</sup> *MISLS Album*, 1946, 80; War Department press release, October 22, 1945.

<sup>153</sup> *MISLS Album*, 1946, 62-63; Masaharu Ano, “Loyal Linguists: Nisei of World War II Learned Japanese in Minnesota,” *Minnesota History* 45 (Fall 1977): 275; Slesnick and Slesnick, *Kanji and Codes*, 229, 231-232.

Snelling had 125 classrooms in service by the summer of 1945, with a typical class comprising twenty students.<sup>154</sup>

Buildings 17 and 18 were used, at least for the most part, for barracks for the MISLS students during this period. In a MISLS history, a caption for an aerial photograph of the fort noted that “the two uniform buildings near the [Round] Tower are examples of student quarters.” The link between Buildings 17 and 18 does not appear in this photograph, which is clearly of World War II vintage, confirming that the link was built after the war. The buildings appear in several photographs from this era, but the identity and use of the buildings are not indicated.<sup>155</sup>

According to fort telephone directories from 1944-1945, the school’s Company C was in Building 17-A. The company was initially under the oversight of First Lieutenant G. F. Conway, who was replaced by April 1945 by First Lieutenant P. T. Yamazaki. Building 17-B held a unit not associated with the school, the 446<sup>th</sup> Engineer Depot Company, in 1944. By April 1945, it housed the school’s Company D, which had been in Building 322 in February. Building 18-B held Company F, with First Lieutenant I. W. Levine in command. The mess officer in Building 18-A was Captain R. A. Taylor. He was apparently associated with Company E; the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* announced that in February 1945, the mess for Companies E and F in Building 18 came close to being awarded “kitchen of the week.” Taylor does not appear, though, in a list of commanding officers for the various companies that was included in the 1946 school history.<sup>156</sup>

Temporary shacks where some students lived, nicknamed the “Turkey Farm,” were at the end of Taylor Avenue, next to the reception center. According to the 1946 album, “they housed incoming casual personnel of Company E and outgoing graduate pool of Company B. When School reached peak, student Companies A, D, H, K, and L were also housed here.” One student, Ko Sameshima, described his reaction to being housed there when he arrived from an internment camp in December 1944: “It was especially morale shattering for me to be assigned quarters in a five-man tar-and-paper shack in a sector of rows of such shacks” Another student described his joy in “moving from the smoky ice boxes to the luxurious comfort of the brick barracks.”<sup>157</sup>

Buildings 22 and 30 were not dedicated to school use during this period. Building 22 held a “photo shop,” shoe shop, tailor shop, and warehouse, all associated with the post exchange. Building 30 served as a garage for the 979<sup>th</sup> Signal Motor Messenger Company.<sup>158</sup>

The school started looking for a new home in late 1945 when it appeared likely that Fort Snelling would be deactivated. Because many of the students and instructors were originally

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<sup>154</sup> *MISLS Album, 1946*; Fort Snelling telephone directories, 1944-1945, available at Minnesota Historical Society; caption for photograph of library, *Yuban Gogai*, December 1945; McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists*, 313.

<sup>155</sup> *MISLS Album, 1946*, 62; *Memoirs, Fort Snelling, 1945* (Minnesota: s.n., 1945), n.p., at Minnesota Historical Society; Ishimaru, *Military Intelligence Service Language School*, n.p.

<sup>156</sup> Fort Snelling telephone directories, 1944-1945; “Kitchen of the Week,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, February 10, 1945; *MISLS Album, 1946*, 67.

<sup>157</sup> *MISLS Album, 1946*, 62, 65; McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists*, 311; *Memoirs, Fort Snelling, 1945*.

<sup>158</sup> Fort Snelling telephone directories, 1944-1945.



from the West Coast, a site in that region seemed the most appropriate. The Presidio of Monterey, California, was also slated to close, but the school was able to convince the army that it should be taken off the closure list. “MIS Language School California-Bound,” proclaimed a headline in the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* on April 26, 1946. The move occurred in June. By this time, the MISLS had trained some 6,000 men and women, with about 4,500 of that number going through the program at Fort Snelling. Of the total graduates, around 85 percent were Nisei.<sup>159</sup>

Because of security concerns during the war, the activities of the language school were not publicized. A month after Japan surrendered, Colonel Rasmussen held a press conference at Fort Snelling to tout the accomplishments of the school and its graduates. In conjunction with this event, the War Department issued a press release asserting that “practically every army officer or army NCO engaged in Japanese language work today has been at one time or another a student at MISLS.” The release continued: “During the Japanese war, the graduates of the MISLS were vital cogs in the combat intelligence and psychological warfare work. Today, they are in Japan serving as equally important links in communication between General MacArthur’s occupation army and the Japanese people.” By 1946, graduates had “been placed in approximately 130 different Army and Navy units, with the Marine Corps, and have been loaned to our Allies. . . . Never before in history did one Army know so much concerning its enemy prior to actual engagement as did the American army during most of the Pacific campaign. . . . Information and knowledge of the enemy obtained by these men cannot be measured in words but by the weight of victory itself.”<sup>160</sup>

The school also had a lasting legacy on the culture of Minnesota. In 1940, only fifty-one people of Japanese descent lived in the state. A decade later, that number had jumped to over one thousand.<sup>161</sup>

Japanese American veterans of the school formed local groups after the war both to continue friendships and to raise public awareness of the school’s important role in the war effort. The Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota worked with the Minnesota Historical Society to install a historical marker at Camp Savage and donated cherries trees for planting there, at Fort Snelling, and at several other locations in 1990. A member subsequently reported: “Unfortunately many of the saplings were unable to weather the *hageshii* (severe) Minnesota winters, although some have survived.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> McNaughton, *Nisei Linguistics*, 420; “MIS Language School California-Bound,” *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, April 26, 1946; Ano, “Loyal Linguists,” 283; *MISLS Album*, 1946, 13.

<sup>160</sup> McNaughton, *Nisei Linguistics*, 458; War Department press release, October 22, 1945.; *MISLS Album*, 1946, 14-15.

<sup>161</sup> Ano, “Loyal Linguists,” 273.

<sup>162</sup> Bud Nakasone, “Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota,” in *Unsung Heroes: The Military Intelligence Service, Past, Present, Future: The Eyes and Ears of the Allied Forces during and after World War II* (Seattle, Wash.: MIS-Northwest Association, 1996); 105-106.

## STANDING DOWN FROM THE WAR

Well before September 1945, changes in the army's use of the fort presaged the end of the war. After processing some 200,000 men, the fort's reception center was shut down in October 1944, a casualty of the army's consolidation efforts as the number of new recruits dropped. The fort still served as a pre-induction center where conscripts and volunteers were given medical and other examinations. They returned to the fort several weeks later to appear before a selection board. If chosen by the army, the new enlistees would then report to a reception center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Induction center activities had apparently returned to the fort by September 1945 when a headline in the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* announced: "Enlistments in Regular Army Will Be Accepted at Snelling." According to the article, "Another sure sign that the nation is returning to normal was the War Department's announcement last week that direct enlistments to the peacetime Regular Army are authorized." In June 1946, a newspaper reported that "more than 1,200 inductees went through this week, with a good percentage of them being army relistments." It noted, though, that the center would be moved to Fort Crook, Nebraska, at the end of the month.<sup>163</sup>

In September 1944, Fort Snelling had become a "reception station" to process soldiers starting and ending furlough after service overseas, and in November it opened a "separation center" to discharge soldiers from the army. Together with the induction center, these units formed a "personnel center" that marked its busiest period ever between May and July 1945, processing 60,000 men. The activity continued into the fall, resulting in the fieldhouse (Building 201, the cavalry drill hall) being temporarily converted into a dormitory for 850 men. The army was working to develop larger regional separation centers, though, and on December 10 the separation facility at Fort Snelling was closed after processing some 15,000 officers and enlisted men.<sup>164</sup>

While the army had planned for a systematic discharge of troops following the end of the war, political and public pressure forced a quicker pace. By the end of 1945, the army had discharged about half of its 8 million troops. It had also lowered its sights for its post-war capacity, dropping plans for 4 million regular and reserve troops to 1.5 million. Due to budget considerations, President Truman pushed that number down even more, and by the end of the 1946-1947 fiscal year "the Army was a volunteer body of 684,000 ground troops and 306,000 airmen."<sup>165</sup>

With the drawdown of troops after the war, rumors were rife that Fort Snelling would be closed. By June 1946, although the army still had about 1,500 workers at the fort—800 army personnel and 700 civilians—and the fort's administration had not received official word of

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<sup>163</sup> "Enlistments in Regular Army Will Be Accepted at Snelling," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 8, 1945; "Reception Center Closes Sunday; 200,000 Men Processed Here," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, October 21, 1944; "VA Set to Take Over Fort," n.p., June 29, 1946, newspaper clipping in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

<sup>164</sup> "First Overseas Veteran Processed at Fort's New Reception Station," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 9, 1944; "Separation Center's First," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, November 11, 1944; "Personnel Center Handles 60,000 Men in Three Months," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, September 22, 1945; "Field House Turned into Huge Dormitory Housing 850 Men," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, October 13, 1945; "Fort's Separation Point Closes 10 Dec., 15,000 Officers and E. M. Discharged," *Fort Snelling Bulletin*, December 8, 1945.

<sup>165</sup> Steward, ed., *American Military History*, vol. 2, *The United States Army in a Global Era*, 200-201.

the closing, it was commonly assumed that the Veterans Administration would be taking over the facility early the next year. A newspaper article in February emphasized the positive outcomes from this change: “The news that Fort Snelling will be taken over by the Veterans administration presages a number of good things for this community. It probably means that much of the land on the Snelling reservation will be made available for the extension of the Wold-Chamberlain airport. It indicates that the northwest headquarters of [the] VA, with an ultimate personnel of 2,000 and a \$5,000,000 payroll, will be permanently anchored here. There is even hoped that the buildings to be made available for VA purposes will in some small measure relieve the house and office space shortage in Minneapolis.” At the same time, “there will be some sharp twinges of sentiment at the thought that historic Snelling is to be inactivated. . . . It would be foolish to deny that Minneapolis has become genuinely attached to Fort Snelling through the years, or that its own traditions have become closely interwoven with those of that venerable army post.” The article concluded, though, “the fact that Fort Snelling is to be taken over by [the] VA is a sign of the times. The veterans administration, for an indefinite period, will unquestionably be Big Business.”<sup>166</sup>

By July, the VA’s branch headquarters had moved into “three large barracks, several warehouses and the fieldhouse.” Another account mentioned only two barracks: “Carpenters, plasterers and painters are busy rehabilitating two large barracks buildings, formerly occupied by enlisted men, which will be converted into office space.” Neither article provided further identification of the buildings, although they were likely the artillery barracks. The field house had “several hundred desks jammed into its spacious interior.”<sup>167</sup>

The VA offered employees the chance to build out apartments in ten other barracks: “Each building can be made into four apartments suitable for four rooms each. The renters, who must take it on a three-year lease, must pay the cost of partitioning, as well as buying and installing all kitchen and bathroom equipment, electricity outlets and heating ducts.”<sup>168</sup>

The main post exchange was closed and the reception center was relocated to Fort Riley, Kansas, in the fall of 1946. The Officers’ Reserve Corps took over responsibility for the officers’ club. The last army personnel left Fort Snelling in the following January, when about fifty enlisted men and twelve officers closed the induction center. Its functions were moved to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. The move left the Veterans Administration, along with reserve units, as the only occupants of the decommissioned fort.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> “VA Set to Take Over Fort”; “The VA Moves to Snelling,” n.p., February 22, 1946, newspaper clipping in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

<sup>167</sup> “Branch Office of VA Moves to Fort Snelling,” n.p., July 1, 1946, newspaper clipping in Fuller Collection; “VA Set to Take over Fort.”

<sup>168</sup> “Branch Office of VA Moves to Fort Snelling”; “Place to Live, with Strings,” n.p., 1946, newspaper clipping in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

<sup>169</sup> “Main Post Exchange Closes at Snelling,” n.p., September 7, 1946, “Expect Army to Move Fort Induction Center,” n.p., October 11, 1946, and “Last Army Men Quit Fort Jan. 13,” n.p., n.d., newspaper clippings in Box 2, Fuller Collection.

## A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE FORT

The challenge of addressing the health needs of veterans after World War II was exponentially greater than after the first war, but the country had a head start because of groundwork during the interwar years. To serve World War I veterans in Minnesota, the federal Public Health Service had acquired two hospitals, one in Minneapolis and the other in Saint Paul, in 1921. The facilities were soon outgrown. The newly created U.S. Veterans Bureau took over the hospitals in the following year and launched plans to erect a new hospital in Minneapolis. Four years later, it obtained an appropriate site when the War Department transferred 165 acres of the Fort Snelling Reservation to the bureau. A new six-hundred-bed hospital opened in 1927.<sup>170</sup>

The VA took over Fort Snelling in large part to address the tsunami of veterans after the Second World War. The VA immediately put the army's two-hundred-bed hospital building on Taylor Avenue to use, dedicating it primarily to patients with neurological and psychiatric issues. (These services returned to the main hospital when it received an eight-story addition and major remodeling in the mid-1950s.)<sup>171</sup>

It took more work to convert Buildings 17 and 18 into an outpatient clinic. The substantial renovation removed the front porches and added a two-story link between the buildings. On the interior, partitions were removed and added. It might have been at this time that the internal firewalls separating the two halves of each building were breached to form long corridors extending east and west from the link. Some of the structural columns were boxed. Acoustical tile ceilings and new flooring were installed. Original window and door trim was apparently removed and replaced with narrower trim to give the interior a more modern appearance.<sup>172</sup>

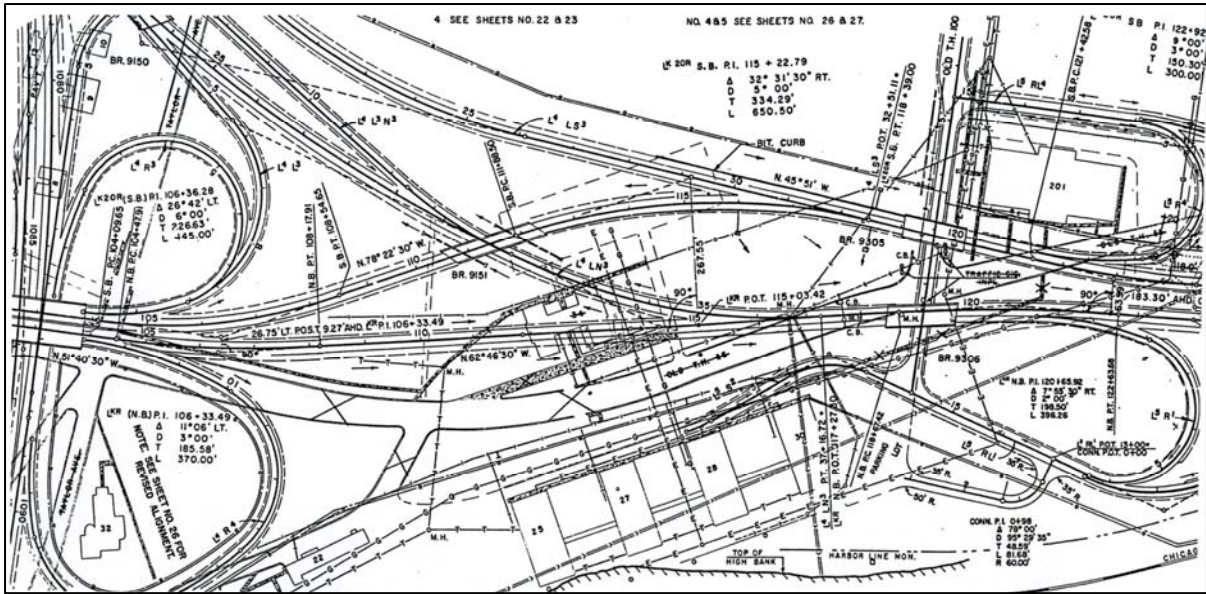
Departments in the renovated facility, which opened in April 1948, included dentistry, manned by four dentists; a dental laboratory; an optical unit; and physical therapy, offering a variety of treatments including infra-red lamps and a diathermy machine for muscular and other internal ailments. A 1977 history of the VA hospital described the outpatient services offered at Buildings 17 and 18 at that time as including "audiology (hearing) clinics, plastic eye and restoration clinic, orthopedic brace shop, prosthetic treatment center, day treatment center, [and] mental hygiene clinic." The book explained (incorrectly) that "the buildings occupied by the clinic date back to the pre 1900's." It added that the structures "have been

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<sup>170</sup> *Fiftieth Anniversary, Veterans Administration Hospital, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1927-1977* (Minneapolis, Minn.: published by the hospital, 1977), n.p.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> "Veterans Flock to Snelling's New Out-Patient Clinic," April 19, 1948, newspaper clipping in Fuller Collection. Historic American Buildings Survey photographs of other army barracks dating from the early twentieth century provide information on typical interior finishes. Cavalry barracks at Fort Des Moines, including Buildings 55-56 and 65-66, were completed in 1905 and were virtually identical to Buildings 17 and 18 (HABS No. IA-121). Although most of the interiors were significantly remodeled over the years, wide window trim and pressed-tin ceilings are visible in some photographs. Other barracks, such as Building 143 at Fort Sam Houston, which opened in 1907, have a somewhat different exterior design, but interior photographs depict unaltered doors, wainscoting, and trim that were probably common at army posts during this era.



*Minnesota Department of Highways, Trunk Highway No. 55, State Project No. 2725-06.  
Sheet No. 24 of 83, August 1958*

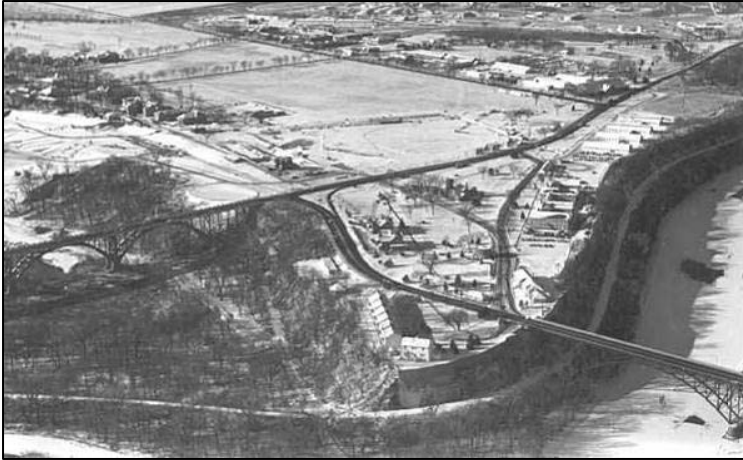
completely renovated and provide a modern environment for the delivery of medical care on an outpatient basis.” The facility handled over 60,000 patients annually.<sup>173</sup>

More change was to come to Fort Snelling in the 1950s, thanks in large part to the expansion of the long-established east-west route through the fort into a four-lane, limited-access highway. The stable guardhouses (Buildings 26 and 29) apparently fell for its construction, as did one of the 1903 artillery barracks (Building 34); the other barrack (Building 33) was destroyed by fire earlier in the decade. Even worse than the loss of the buildings was the physical, visual, and perceptual barrier that the road imposed between the Upper and Lower Posts. The upgrading of Highway 5 to the east isolated the Officers’ Club from the rest of the post, and much of the fort’s south end, including the area of the reception center, was absorbed into the Minneapolis-Saint Paul airport during an expansion to accommodate jet aircraft in the early 1960s. The Round Tower almost ended up in the middle of a cloverleaf at the intersection of the two highways; instead, the chapel received that dubious distinction, and a tunnel reduced the impact of the construction on the frontier fort.

The Minnesota Historical Society led the battle to save the oldest part of the fort, but plans for the fort’s restoration/reconstruction to the 1820s period resulted in the loss of fort buildings from later eras, including the 1860s prison (Building 14) in 1972. Three of the four stables (Buildings 25, 27, and 28) were removed for the construction of the underground visitor center and its parking lot in 1983. These alterations dramatically changed the landscape of the Lower Post—as they were intended to do. The goal was to return the area to a semblance of its early nineteenth-century appearance, ignoring the shadow and roar of the adjacent freeway.

<sup>173</sup> “Veterans Flock to Snelling’s New Out-Patient Clinic”; *Fiftieth Anniversary, Veterans Administration Hospital*, n.p.





*Left: December 1958. (Saint Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press photograph)*

*Below left: April 1961. (Tribune photograph-Box 1, Fuller Collection)*

*Below right: circa 1965. (Box 1, Fuller Collection)*



To complete this vision, Buildings 17 and 18 were slated for demolition after the Veterans Administration closed its outpatient clinic there. In fact, the 1968 Program for Preservation and Utilization, which was associated with the conveyance of the Lower Post from the federal government to the State of Minnesota, required those buildings to be removed.

Preservation sympathies had changed, though, by the early 1990s when the General Services Administration began the process of transferring the buildings to the state. The State Historic Preservation Office sponsored a reuse study in 1993 to consider alternatives for keeping the buildings in place. In April of that year, while the study was underway, thieves broke into the building and removed copper pipes and wiring, but the loss did not seriously damage the structures.

## CONCLUSIONS

Volume 2 of the army's "National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations" discusses integrity issues for various building types. "Barracks," the report explains, "should retain most of their overall exterior form, architectural ornamentation, and construction materials from their periods of significance. Many pre-1940 barracks have been converted to office use. Porches may have been removed or enclosed; window, door, and roof materials often have been modified. Where subsequent additions or renovations have occurred, barracks still may have integrity if they retain the majority of their character-defining features, including setting, overall shape, pattern of openings, materials, and architectural details." The report adds: "In many cases, even with major modification, a barracks complex will contribute to the character of an historic district."<sup>174</sup>

As for stables, the context study for Quartermaster General standardized plans notes:

Stables and stable complexes are associated with a time when horses were essential to military operations. Horses were not only essential to cavalry and artillery units, but were used to move military supplies. . . . The evolution of the design of stable complexes is related to the development of installation planning, culminating in the post planning and beautification movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." In considering integrity, the study observes that "few military stables continue to serve as stables. Most have been converted to other uses. . . . To possess sufficient integrity to contribute to an historic district, stables and their associated support buildings should retain their original location and most of their setting, design, exterior materials, workmanship, and association. Exterior elements that often have been modified include location and size of window and door openings and the installation of new doors and windows. In cases of subsequent additions or renovations, the stables and associated buildings still may have integrity if they retain the majority of their character-defining features, including building shape, roof design, exterior materials, overall pattern of openings, and relationship to associated buildings within the installation plan."<sup>175</sup>

Given this guidance, it appears that Buildings 17 and 18 retain relatively good physical integrity. The loss of the porches, which occurred after the period of singificance, is the most unfortunate exterior change. The link between the buildings also occurred outside the period of significance. Reconstructing the porches and removing the link would significantly improve the buildings' integrity. The 1930s additions to the rear date from the fort's period of significance, although they do not exhibit the same quality of design and construction. The buildings' interiors are largely a product of the extensive remodeling that was completed after World War II by the Veterans Administration, which operated an outpatient clinic in the buildings for many years. The structural columns and floors are the primary features of the original interior that remain.

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<sup>174</sup> Goodwin, "National Historic Context for Department of Defense Installations," vol. 2, 320.

<sup>175</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, "Context Study of the United States Quartermaster General Standardized Plans," 338.

Building 30, the only one of the four cavalry stables that survives, recalls a period when horses were essential to military operations. Its modification into a garage where motor vehicles were stored and repaired exemplifies another important period of the fort's evolution. As such, Building 30 is a very significant structure, even though related buildings—other stables, guardhouses, a blacksmith shop—no longer exist. Building 22 is likewise significant as a Lower Post vestige of the era when the Department of Dakota arrived at Fort Snelling, although its current connection to the visitor center detracts from its integrity.

The four surviving Lower Post buildings—17, 18, 22, and 30—that stand outside of the old fort walls each convey important historical information from the eras that produced them. Their present surroundings, however, are a product of the last half of the twentieth century. These surroundings could clearly be improved, but rehabilitation, rather than restoration or reconstruction, seems the most appropriate of the Secretary of the Interior's treatment standards given the loss of many buildings and the presence of modern intrusions, particularly Highway 55, which has severed this area from the Upper Post both physically and visually. Creating an environment in which the buildings can better communicate the eras they represent would greatly enhance the National Historic Landmark district.



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